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ABSTRACT

This guide, developed in British Columbia, is intended to help tutors teach literacy skills to adults. In nine chapters, it covers the basics of teaching reading and writing to adults, through short case histories, anecdotes, and information about adult learning. The chapters cover the following topics: (1) the joys of tutoring; (2) getting to know the student; (3) using the language experience approach; (4) helping adults learn to read; (5) helping adults learn word attack skills; (6) helping adults learn to write; (7) helping adults learn to spell; (8) setting goals, assessing progress, and planning lessons; and (9) measuring the results of tutoring. A list of mostly Canadian resources is provided, organized by tutor resources, publishers, and newspapers and magazines. (KC)

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A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students

Adult Basic Education

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Adult Basic Education

A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students

Prepared for the Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training

by Joyce Cameron
with Myrna Rabinowitz

Project Management by North Shore Continuing Education
(North and West Vancouver School Districts)
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On behalf of all the contributors, I hope that you, the reader, find this document to be a useful guide .

Doug Lædgerwood
Project Manager

A Note About Gender

Tutors and students are neither always male nor always female. In facing the problem of which gender to use in this book we wanted to avoid the rather awkward,"he/she". We also chose not to speak of tutors and students only in the asexual plural form. Instead, we have referred to each tutor or student as either "he" or "she", attempting to use each gender with equal frequency.

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THE JOYS OF TUTORING

I always had a full life—working, bringing up three kids, lots of friends, people, activities and fun. I'm 51 and I've been a nurse's aide since my husband died about 20 years ago. My daughters are all grown up now and I'm so proud of them. I remember how hard it was bringing them up all alone and especially because I couldn't read and write. They tell me that they're proud of me for managing as well as I did. I guess I'm proud of myself too. I used to think I was the only one who couldn't read and write but I bet there are a lot of people like me out there.

Sylvia, literacy student

It is difficult to conceive of people going through the Canadian education system without learning to read and write well. In fact about 5 million Canadians (25 per cent of the adult population) cannot read and write well enough to read the label on a bottle of medication or fill out an application form, and 90 percent of these adults were born and educated here. For B.C., the estimated number is 260,000 or 12 per cent of the adult population. The reasons for this are varied: hospitalization during childhood, poverty, learning disabilities, school systems not meeting the student's needs, unstable home environments or family difficulties. Whatever the reason, it is important that these people get help. Unfortunately, the existing literacy programs in Canada provide only a fraction of what is needed. It is estimated that less than 2 per cent of adults who cannot read and write are currently attending classes or being tutored.

Tutors can make a major difference in the lives of these people. No longer would they need to depend on someone else to help them deal with written communication. Tutors can teach their students the skills necessary to read and write and give them the power of total communication, the power to gain full control over their lives.

EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter we will examine some of the difficulties faced by adults who cannot read and write. We will also look at how adults learn and how you can be an effective literacy tutor.

LIVING WITHOUT LITERACY

Literacy Problems Limit Opportunities

When I was eight we had a terrible car accident. After that I remember being in the hospital more than I was at home. I went to school until I was 16 but I didn't learn much 'cause I was in the hospital so much.

I got married when I was 19 and my husband died when my kids were pretty young. That's when I became a nurse's aide. I always wanted to be a nurse but I never had the chance. Now that my kids are grown, I have time. I'm learning how to read and write thanks to my tutor, Joanne. After all these years when my kids had to do so much for me like look up phone numbers, write letters and cheques and read things for me, I'm learning how to do things for myself. All these years I felt ashamed. When I went to the bank or somewhere that I had to write, I made up excuses like I can't see or my hand is sore. You get sick of it and anyhow people catch on. But things are much better now. My happiest day will be when I can read my grandchildren a bedtime story.

Sylvia, 51, widow, nurse's aide, mother of three daughters aged 29, 27 and 24.

In our print-oriented society, living without literacy means living in the dark. You can't read the latest news, notices that come in the mail, instructions for appliances or medication, bills, the phone book, flyers, signs, billboards, street names, maps, bus schedules, etc., etc. Living without literacy means you can't write a cheque, a note to your child's teacher or a letter. You can't fill out a bank deposit slip, a voter's ballot or a form. You can't apply for U.I.C., a driver's licence, a mortgage, a loan, insurance, etc., etc.

In order to do any of the above you need to ask someone for help. It means you are dependent upon your husband, wife, family or strangers. It means telling lies and covering up your inability by carrying broken glasses, wearing a tensor wrist band or making up excuses.

Living without literacy often means being trapped in lower income jobs with no chance for advancement; in jobs which are often dull, boring and unstimulating. It means that doors are closed to training and education programs, to better jobs and to full participation in society.

"Living without literacy, is like living in a different world." (Sylvia).

Literacy Problems Create Negative Feelings and Attitudes

I dropped out of school in Grade 8. I must have been crazy, but I hated school so much. I hated the teachers. When I made a mistake they used to embarrass me so much that I finally just gave up trying to learn and just got into trouble all the time.

It took a long time before I even admitted to myself that I wanted to learn how to read and write. The thought of learning reminded me of school. But I just couldn't

stand it anymore. I was tired of feeling so helpless and scared so I decided to try and learn. When I first started the tutoring I gave my tutor, Janice, a hard time. I needed some time before I could let myself really trust her. I feel bad that I wasn't very friendly at the beginning and I can't thank her enough for sticking it out and for everything she's done for me. I'm so grateful.

Being illiterate is like being blind in a way. Now for the first time in my life I feel that I'm really living, that I can really see. I'm not completely there yet, but I sure am on my way.

Sharon, 40, married, cashier, mother of two children

The "words" below are probably meaningless to you. Imagine if this script were all around you and you couldn't read any written material such as books, notices, instructions or street signs. You would probably feel stupid, frustrated and helpless.

Οκλ βζ τφρνμ κητγξ Ληκ βξκλ φτγν βχφκ δκλ
Ησμνπ Τκνσφξ ρφκτδδ ωδτϖμ ηψωνϖσ γν
Ωτρ νσ τβρ πτσκμτρ Πσλχλ σρντ δτνωτρν

People who cannot read and write often live with feelings of humiliation, shame, embarrassment, inadequacy, low self-esteem, stupidity, anger, frustration, stress, fear, helplessness, failure and depression. Through the years they have developed ways of improvising, hiding, disguising and coping without literacy skills, but the feelings of low self-esteem are still evident. Many have developed doubts about their own ability to learn. Some may have extremely unpleasant memories of school and very negative attitudes towards learning.

Literacy Problems Do Not Mean an Inability to Learn

Most of us have learning barriers or blocks towards learning certain things. A person may be a brilliant historian, but not have any understanding of car engines or the stock market. Usually the reason for this is that at some point we started to believe that this subject was something we could not learn. Once you believe this, then it really does become very hard to learn. You may start doing things wrong, forming bad habits and the people who teach you may start to treat you differently and this only strengthens your belief that you can't do it. The barrier has been formed.

In order to learn something which you think you can't learn, you have to start believing that you can learn. This is where tutors can help. Through the help and encouragement of tutors, many adults with reading difficulties began to believe they could learn and are now indeed able to read and write.

Almost everyone can learn to read and write, although some may be slower than others. Many adults who had previously been labelled learning disabled have learned literacy skills. Most learning disabled adults can learn to read when an appropriate teaching method is used. As tutors, we need to break down our students' learning barriers. One way to do this is to learn more about the nature of the adult learner.

WORKING WITH ADULT LEARNERS

- **Adults have experience and maturity.** They approach learning with a sense of who they are and what they want. Find out about their life experiences and let this information guide you in how and what to teach.

- **Adults usually know what they want to learn.** Find out what their goals and interests are and let these determine what you teach.

- **Adults often have time to learn only what they need.** Adults lead complex and busy lives with many commitments. They do not have time to learn what is irrelevant to them. Find out what they need to learn and teach them what is relevant to their lives.

- **Adults learn best when the material is meaningful to their lives.** Find out about your students' daily lives, work, families, interests, past experiences and hopes for the future. Make sure the content or subject matter you teach is meaningful to your students.

- **Adults have different learning styles.** Some need time to think everything through slowly while others proceed quickly. Some people are strong visual learners while others are stronger auditory learners. Generally, the more senses involved in the learning process, the better. The more your students can hear it, say it, see it and touch it, the more complete the learning will be. Be sensitive to your students' learning styles and do what's best for them.

- **Adults are usually self directing.** They know what they like and what they don't like. They know what helps them learn and what works for them. Encourage them to participate in the selection of the learning tasks, activities and curriculum.

- **Increased age affects reaction time, vision and hearing.** Be sure to have proper lighting and ventilation and watch the noise level. Type size and contrast between black print and white paper is an important consideration when selecting text for older learners.

- **Adults want to use what they have learned as soon as possible.** They want to apply what they have learned. Give them opportunities to use what they are learning outside the tutoring sessions.

- **Adults are voluntary learners.** They enjoy learning new things. In the case of literacy students, they will be nervous and hesitant at first and may seem unenthusiastic. Nevertheless, they are motivated and really want to learn to read and write. This motivation is a tremendous bonus for the tutor.

Examining Attitudes

In order to be successful at tutoring, we need to feel positive about learning and teaching. We need to feel positive about our students and about ourselves as potential teachers. Above all we need to keep in mind that tutoring is fun and that the relaxed atmosphere of the tutoring situation creates an environment where we can have a good time with our students.

Attitudes about yourself

Most people have doubts about whether they can be effective tutors. They think that because they are not trained teachers they won't be able to help anybody. In fact, all new tutors and even trained teachers are unsure of themselves when they first start out. It takes time and experience before you start to feel confident about yourself. Self-confidence will come when you see your student responding positively to your tutoring. Those who want and like to teach and who examine themselves and their values, make the best teachers.

Attitudes about your students

Remember that the inability to read and write does not imply the inability to learn. It does not represent a lack of intellectual capacity. Rather it indicates that the intellectual capacity has not yet reached its full potential. That is the challenge for the tutor. With your encouragement your students will begin to see themselves as people who can learn to read and write. The expectation of the teacher strongly influences how the student performs.

Feel positive about your students. Although they have not yet learned to read and write, they have learned many other things in life with which you may be unfamiliar. Let them teach you and share their life experiences with you. When you teach someone, you also learn from them. Show your students that you feel confident that they can learn to read and write and they will believe it as well.

Attitudes about learning and teaching

> *At first I didn't think it would work. I couldn't believe that by just working on what my student needed and was interested in he would learn to read and write. That certainly wasn't how I learned to read and write. But it really did happen!*
>
> *John, literacy tutor*

Our attitudes about learning and teaching are largely shaped by our own learning experiences at school. Because much of our learning took place in a formal classroom setting with a formal curriculum, we may have doubts about the effectiveness of an unstructured, informal tutoring situation. It is interesting to note that students who are in non-traditional learning situations do as well or better than those who are in traditional settings. The way you teach is more important than what you teach. How you teach and how you act will determine how you relate to your student. A good student/teacher relationship is the key to success.

Relating to Your Students

- **Show that you care and respect your students and they will learn to trust you.** Your students may have built up a lot of resistance and negativity towards learning and

teachers. When your students feel you care and respect them, they will let go of their fears.

- **Create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.** Help your students relax. This will help break down any feelings of frustration, fear and embarrassment they might have.

- **Be encouraging.** Build on your students' strengths. Be positive and this will help them develop a positive attitude towards what they are learning. This will, in turn, help them learn better. Praise your students when they do well. Positive feedback is essential to successful learning.

- **Listen.** Don't talk too much. Let your students do most of the talking. This shows you are interested in them. Ask questions which require more than yes or no answers and encourage your students to talk and ask you questions as well. Don't interrupt when your students are talking. This suggests that what they have to say is not important. A good tutor is a good listener.

- **Observe**. Use your eyes as well as your ears to listen to your students. Non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and body language express your students' feelings. Be a good observer and you will learn a great deal about your students which can help you in planning lessons and determining what they like or dislike.

- **Guide.** Be there when needed but don't do too much. Avoid a dependency relationship. Encourage your students to do as much as possible without your help. This will enable them to become more independent and function better with literacy outside the tutoring situation. Remember your long-term goal is to help your student be an independent reader and writer.

- **Teach what your students need.** Adults don't have time to learn material they don't need and they learn best if the material is relevant to them and suits their needs.

- **Keep a consistent schedule.** Meet regularly and be serious about sticking to your schedule. It is better to meet more frequently for short periods of time (e.g., twice a week for one and one-half hours) than to meet less frequently for long periods (e.g., once a week for three hours).

Tutoring Tips

Ensure Early Success

Make sure to let your students feel success during the first few critical lessons. Don't be afraid to start with material you think is too easy. Early success will help break down the learning barriers and overcome negative feelings right from the start. Without this early success, your students might discontinue the tutoring because they feel too discouraged.

> *At the beginning of her first tutoring session with Janice, Sharon was very withdrawn. She avoided looking at Janice and spoke very little. Janice realized that Sharon was very nervous and tried to be as friendly and relaxed as possible. After a short exchange of personal information, Janice asked Sharon what she wanted to read and write. Sharon told Janice about her problem reading the information on cheques, especially the written amount. So they began working together and by the end of the lesson Sharon could read the written numbers from one to ten. Sharon was so pleased that she was actually smiling. She forgot how nervous she had been at the start.*

It is important to note that there is a significant drop out rate which occurs in the early stages of the tutoring situation with literacy students. Often the students are not aware that learning to read and write will be so difficult and time-consuming. The student may not have the time to devote and may come back to it at a later date.

Plan with Students

Involve your students in planning. A successful program is planned with the student, not for the student. Remember, adults know what they want. Encourage your students to be active learners, to be actively involved in making decisions about the tutoring program: the goals, learning activities, approaches to use and curriculum. Also encourage constant feedback and be open, flexible and prepared to change. Spend the last part of each lesson talking about what you will work on in your next meeting. Involving your students in planning helps you to prepare the appropriate activities, topics and materials for your lessons.

Use Students' Experiences

Use your students' experiences as material for teaching. Adult learners have their own treasure of experiences in life. These are a never-ending source of ideas. Because of your students' high interest level, learning will be more successful. Using your students' experiences and input also indicates to them that you value them as people.

Follow a Basic Teaching Model

An effective model for teaching is to:

- give an explanation;
- demonstrate the skill;
- have your student practice the skill (first at an easy level and then at a more difficult level);
- provide opportunities to apply and transfer the skill;
- provide opportunities for review.

Always remember to move from the simple to the complex and from the concrete to the abstract.

Give Clear Explanations

It is important to explain what you are going to do and why. Understanding the processes involved often leads to better learning and may help your students understand what works or doesn't work for them. It also may help to bring about a better tutor-learner relationship, one based on mutual respect between two adults.

Promote Learning by Doing

In addition to actively involving your students in planning, make certain that your students are actively participating in the learning tasks themselves as much as possible. Your students will learn better if they are doing the activities and not merely watching you do them.

Make the learning experiences dynamic and active. Bake a cake from a recipe. Build a bookshelf from a set of instructions and diagrams. Sew a dress from a pattern. Play a record and sing along with the lyrics. Use found materials or learning materials which are readily available in your students' homes such as a phone book, a telephone bill, a TV guide, a menu or a newspaper. These are not only interesting to your students, but they are also essential to their lives. Vary your lessons and change the activities. This will hold your students' interest and help them learn better.

Pace Lessons

A literacy lesson can be very draining for students. In order to ease the strain and keep your students' attention, it is important to vary the activities and the pace as well as allowing for breaks. Half an hour is probably the maximum time a student can work efficiently at the same activity. Vary the lesson so that a difficult activity for your student will be followed by a relatively easy or less

stressful one; a written activity will be followed by an oral one; and a lively, fast-paced activity will be followed by a slower-paced one. At all times watch your pace. Are you going too quickly or too slowly for your students? Are they struggling to keep up or do they look bored? Your students are the best indicators of your pace. Let their responses guide you in pacing your lessons.

Learn From Mistakes

Allow your students to try things and make mistakes. Students need to feel that they can take risks and make mistakes. Don't correct all the time. Let some errors go. Correct only errors which are directly related to the point that you are teaching at the moment. Too much correction will make your students feel that they are not progressing well or that they are failing and this will inhibit and discourage them. However, your students' errors should be the basis for your lesson planning so be sure to make notes of recurring errors in order to work on them in future lessons.

Encourage Practice and Review

In order to learn any new skill, a great deal of practice is required. This applies to the skills involved in reading and writing as well. When you teach something new, make sure you give your students the opportunity to repeat it many times. A new skill requires a great deal of repetition before it is learned. After the initial teaching, it is important for you to review the same material many times in subsequent lessons so that your students will remember it. Every lesson should contain opportunities for your students to review and practice previously taught skills.

TUTORS LEARN FROM AND WITH EACH OTHER

Check Progress

Each lesson should include a short check to see what your students have learned and where further work is required. Assessment should be ongoing, informal and non-threatening.

See Chapter 9 for more detailed information about student assessment.

In addition to evaluating your students' performance, it is important to evaluate your own performance on an ongoing basis. What worked well for your students? What helped them learn? What didn't work well and why? Involve your students in this evaluation process. Every tutor experiences lessons that were excellent in addition to lessons that flopped. Analyzing what went wrong helps us to improve our students' performance as well as our own.

Use Community Resources

Don't work in isolation. If you are not already connected to one of the literacy tutoring programs in your area, do consider joining one. Working alone is often difficult and means that you have no one with whom to share your ideas. If there is no tutoring program available in your area, try to maintain contact with other professionals, immigrant aid agencies, colleges, teachers and other groups and individuals interested in literacy. Reach out and find out about community resources in your area. Don't try to do it all on your own.

THE JOYS OF TUTORING

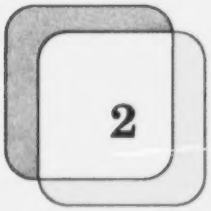
Tutoring has given me so much. It has been the most rewarding thing I've ever done. I know that I have made a tremendous difference in the lives of my students. Tutoring has also given me a great deal of insight and a different perspective on life. I have learned about humility and patience. I feel that I've really grown as a person. And while I was teaching my students how to read and write, they taught me about all kinds of things: gardening, music, embroidery, and even how to fix my car.

Helen, literacy tutor

Tutoring has many rewards. Because of the close relationship which often develops in a tutoring situation, tutors often gain a friend they might otherwise not have had the opportunity to get to know.

When you teach, you learn. You learn about the subject you are teaching because teaching something causes you to examine it more carefully. You also learn from your students. Our greatest teachers are often our own students. We learn from their experiences and their outlook on life.

When you help other people, you are rewarded by the knowledge that you have helped them improve their lives. This makes you feel more positive about yourself as a person and gives you a sense of purpose and a feeling that you have contributed to society in a meaningful way.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STUDENT

I felt sick. I was so nervous I almost didn't show up. But then I decided I'd better go, because all the arrangements had been made. And I wanted to learn to read. I mean, I felt I had to learn to read. I'd been putting it off and putting it off. So I went. My tutor was so nice that after about an hour I began to think that maybe it would be OK this time.

Susan, literacy student

Just before our first meeting I began to have a lot of second thoughts about the whole idea of my being a tutor. It was too late to back out though, so I kept telling myself it would be fine. I always find meeting new people a little difficult, but this time I was so worried that I'd say the wrong thing.

Donna, volunteer literacy tutor

Failure at school may have been accompanied by humiliation and low self-esteem, so it is not surprising that many non-readers and poor readers have unpleasant memories of school and teachers. These memories may cause students to enter tutoring with many apprehensions, both about their ability to learn and about you. The rapport you establish at your first session will help to dispel your student's concerns and you, too, will feel more comfortable.

EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter we will look at the initial process of getting to know your student to help you answer these questions:

- **What can I say and do to put the student at ease?**
- **How can I find out what she wants to learn?**
- **How do I know what to begin teaching?**
- **What guidelines should we set?**
- **How can I help my student be an active, not a passive, learner?**

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

Breaking the Ice

The first time they met, Susan and Donna both felt very nervous. Susan was uncomfortable about admitting to a stranger that she didn't know how to read and write. She was also worried that she might not be able to learn and that the tutor would think she was stupid. Donna was worried about whether or not she would be a competent tutor.

The training sessions she had taken and the reading she had done had convinced Donna of the necessity for an equal relationship between tutor and student. Her student would learn best if she were involved and responsible for her learning and this could only happen if they planned, worked and evaluated together. Donna hoped they would emerge from their first session feeling more relaxed and having some plans for their next session.

In order to conquer her own nervousness, Donna concentrated on trying to make Susan feel more relaxed. She decided that "small talk" would probably help to break the ice. She began by asking Susan where she lived and if their meeting place was convenient for her. Then Donna talked about the difficulty she had finding a parking spot. This didn't produce much conversation so she tried again. Donna said that she and her husband had moved into the area two years ago and liked it very much. She asked if Susan had lived in the area for a long time.

Susan's answer and the questions and discussion which followed helped to ease the tension. By offering information about herself and her family, Donna had avoided a conversation in which she did all the asking and Susan did all the answering. This helped to establish their relationship on an equal footing. This was very different from Susan's past school experiences.

Establishing Guidelines

Donna felt that it was important that they set guidelines at their first session. This would help avoid misunderstandings later on.

They exchanged phone numbers and agreed to call each other if for some reason one of them had to cancel a session. They discussed what type of place would be best to work in. They wanted a place which was quiet and free from interference. They also wanted it to be private and to have good lighting and ventilation. Susan didn't want her own family to be around and she didn't want to work at Donna's house because she was afraid Donna's family might be there and overhear. They finally decided to meet at the community centre. Donna wanted to use the same place every session so that the routine would help them start their sessions easily and they wouldn't be distracted by unfamiliar surroundings.

They decided on the days and time to meet. At first they contemplated meeting three times a week, but then decided that it wouldn't be convenient. There was no advantage in trying to meet that often if it was going to be a hardship and lead to sessions being cancelled. They decided to meet twice a week so each session could build on the last one and little would be forgotten between sessions.

Donna raised the topic of homework assignments. She told Susan that she would make progress much more quickly if she read and wrote between their sessions. Susan felt this was reasonable, but was concerned that it might be too much for her to do. This led to a discussion of Susan's free time and when she could study at home. They agreed to watch carefully to make sure that Susan did not get snowed under.

Finding a Starting Point

In order to counteract unsuccessful past experiences, students need to be successful right from the start of tutorial sessions. Often students have negative attitudes towards themselves and their ability to learn; success is vital in replacing this negative perception with a more constructive one. However, tutors can only create a positive, successful experience if they begin teaching at the right point. To help you begin at the right place, you or the agency that sponsors your tutoring will want to assess your student's reading and writing knowledge.

The purpose of assessments is to help you decide where to begin and to indicate the student's strengths and weaknesses. Using a standardized test to assess grade level is usually not helpful. Knowing that the student reads at the Grade 2 level or the Grade 6 level would not take into account the wealth of experience she has accumulated, nor would it indicate specifically what the student needs to work on.

When doing assessments it is important to begin with your student as a source of information. She may be able to accurately tell you what she can or cannot do. Ask her! Provide samples of materials which cover a range of reading levels and ask her to choose something she feels comfortable reading. The samples might include such things as a grocery flyer, simple directions for cooking (e.g., directions for cooking spaghetti or making coffee), directions for taking medicine, a postcard, letters, a newspaper for adults learning to read, a daily newspaper or popular magazine. Careful listening to your student's reading, and discussion to check that she understands what she has read, will give you guidelines on where to begin. You should also ask your student to do some writing, for example, her name and address and several sentences or a paragraph on a topic such as why she wants to learn to read and write.

Subsequent chapters in this handbook will help you to know what to look for in your student's reading and writing and what to do to help her make progress. Remember to use the resources of schools and colleges in your community for further assistance.

Placing the Student at the Centre

Before Donna and Susan first met, the tutor coordinator had given Donna the report on Susan's skills according to her assessment. But Donna still felt it was important to hear what Susan had to say. After they had agreed where and when to meet, Donna asked Susan if she did any reading at all. Could she read signs, letters or newspapers? She also asked Susan what she would like to improve. When they began talking about areas in Susan's life where better reading could help her, the following conversation ensued:

Susan: *I'd like to learn how to do banking. I can't write cheques. My husband does all the rest of the banking, but I'd like to be able to write cheques. I've tried, but I can't.*

Donna: *What gives you problems?*

Susan: *All of it. I can't write the numbers and they always want the date. You have to know about the spelling of the dates and I can't do that. I don't know what to put on what line either.*

Donna: *Do you know how to sign your name?*

Susan: *Oh, sure. I know that. I can write my name.*

Donna: *That's really the most important part of the cheque. Without your signature it can't be cashed. But why don't we start with cheques? We can work on what to put on each line and how to write numbers and dates.*

Susan: *OK!*

Donna: *Here. I'll write the numbers from 1 to 10 on this side and the words for the numbers in mixed order over here. See if you can match them up. I'll help if you run into trouble.*

This conversation helped Donna to know what Susan wanted to learn and where to start. Donna was able to make up a simple exercise to help her judge how familiar Susan was with number words. Already they had begun to work on something important to Susan.

Facilitating Active Learning

Perhaps the most important thing which came out of their first meeting was Susan's feeling that Donna respected and listened to her. Donna showed respect for Susan as an adult learner by opening discussions about the time and place for their meetings, about home assignments and about the content of the lessons. These discussions and the recognition of Susan's role in decision making established a clear difference between the tutorial situation and Susan's former school experiences.

But Donna's respectful manner was important in another way as well. By making decisions jointly and by following Susan's lead regarding what she wanted to learn, Donna ensured that Susan was actively involved in the tutorial process. Right from the start, Donna established that she expected Susan to have opinions, concerns and interests which would provide the focus for their work together. While Donna had responsibilities as a teacher, Susan had responsibilities as a student. Susan was responsible for being an active learner, one who was involved in all aspects of her own learning.

Encouraging your student to be an active rather than a passive learner will:

- set your relationship on a more equal footing;
- ensure that the sessions are relevant to her needs;
- create an atmosphere in which she can contribute to the ongoing evaluation of the teaching/learning methods you are using together;
- improve her learning and retention of material;
- make your sessions more interesting and probably more fun for both of you;
- help you to get to know your student.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

Involving the Learner

An Active Learner:	A Passive Learner:	To Promote Active Learning, a Tutor Should:
-takes responsibility for deciding what she wants to learn;	-doesn't decide how literacy skills can help her and lets the tutor make all decisions about what to learn;	-ask the student what she needs and wants to learn;
-organizes information and ideas mentally, comparing new information to what she already knows;	-doesn't relate new information and ideas to old;	-ask "Is it a new idea? Does it fit with what you already know? Does it contradict ideas/information you already have?"
-recognizes when she does or does not understand;	-doesn't assess her own understanding;	-ask "Do you understand? Can you tell me what this means? Can you use your own words to explain?"
-sets goals and evaluates progress towards them;	-allows goals to be established by someone else and allows all evaluation to be external;	-discuss goals and progress with his or her student;
-judges what helps her learn and what doesn't;	-doesn't judge if methods are effective or ineffective;	-ask "What way do you think helped you the most? Does this help? In which of these ways would you learn best?"
-monitors her retention by self-quizzing and reviewing.	-doesn't take initiative for review.	-explain the necessity for review and ask the student to construct a review schedule and record system.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

You are preparing to meet your student for the first time. She is a young, single mother.

1. Make a list of the factors you think should be considered in selecting a place and time to meet.

2. Make a list of the guidelines which you would like to discuss at your session.

3

USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

When I began tutoring, Bert knew the names of the letters of the alphabet and he could read a few words, but that was about all he knew about reading. I was really worried about how I was going to find things for him to read. If all we could do was drill on words and sounds it would be pretty boring. I decided we'd have to make material by having Bert dictate a story while I wrote it down. The workshop instructor had shown us this. It's called the language experience approach. Bert dictated a story about his family and I printed it out. Afterwards we practiced reading it. He couldn't read it all, but he really felt good about being able to read something, especially something about himself.

Shirley, volunteer literacy tutor

Language experience is a flexible, easy-to-use teaching tool. By writing down your student's stories and ideas you are co-operating to create reading material which draws on the student's own experiences and interests. As a result, the student can learn to read using language which is familiar to him and content that is mature and relevant to his experiences.

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter will help you answer the following questions about the language experience approach:

- **How is the language experience approach used to teach reading?**
- **How can language experience be used to teach word recognition?**
- **What is the value of the language experience approach?**

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR USING THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

All you and your student need in order to begin is loose-leaf paper and a pen or you might prefer to use large paper and a felt pen. Ask the student to tell you something about himself (e.g., his family, where he grew up, his hobbies, his likes and dislikes) and explain that you will write down his words. Proceed in three steps:

1. Write down what the student dictates, word for word. Use large print and say each word as you print it. If your student is a complete non-reader the story should be kept quite short.

2. Read the story to him when he has finished dictating. Do not correct his grammar or word choice but encourage him to make any changes or additions he would like. Include the changes in the original copy or if necessary, print a "clean" copy.

3. Read it over to the student several times, encouraging him to join in with you at any point at which he feels comfortable reading.

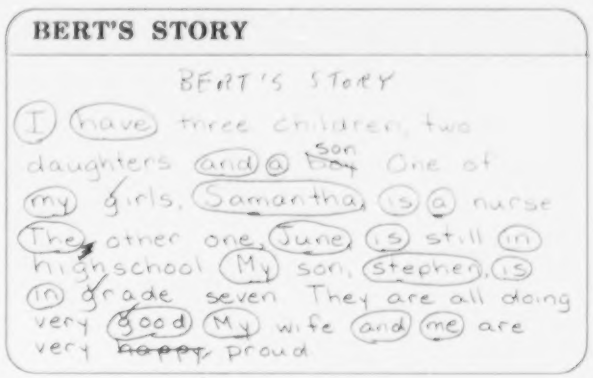
The Language Experience Approach: A Case Study

Bert and Shirley had been working together for only a month. At their fourth tutorial session they had begun work on their second language experience story. Shirley had asked Bert to tell her a bit about his family. As he spoke she turned it into a printed story which they then read together several times. Because Bert was still at the initial stages of reading, not yet sure of the sounds made by the single consonants, Shirley did not think it was realistic to expect him to be able to read the whole story himself. Instead, she started to build on what he already knew.

- She asked him to circle words he knew. This stressed the knowledge he already had and provided a review of those words.

- She read the story aloud again and asked him to identify words beginning with /g/, the consonant sound they had worked on at a previous session.

BERT'S STORY


BERT'S STORY

I have three children, two daughters and a ~~Boy~~ son. One of my girls, Samantha, is a nurse. The other one, June, is still in highschool. My son, Stephen, is in grade seven. They are all doing very good. My wife and me are very ~~happy~~ proud.

At the end of their session they read the story through together again.

In preparation for the next session, Shirley copied Bert's story out in large print. She put the words he had circled on wordcards and added two he had not circled: *one* and *of*. She also recorded his story on a cassette tape. Because an entire week had gone by between sessions, Shirley began the next session with a review of the story.

She began by reading the story to him, inviting him to join in when he wanted.

Shirley asked Bert to read the words she had put on cards. When he had trouble

with three of them, Shirley realized that she should read the cards to him. After she read the words and he repeated them, she asked him to match them with the words in the story. When Bert needed help they read through the story to find the word.

When he matched a word successfully without reading through the story, Shirley asked him to explain how he knew it was the correct word. How did he tell the difference between *a* and *and*, *good* and *grade*? This drew his attention to the kinds of decisions he was making and the visual cues he was using.

Shirley divided the first sentence into two segments based on meaning and copied them onto two strips of paper. They read these together and then she asked Bert to place the strips on the story.

two daughters and a son.

I have three children,

She turned over the story and asked him to put the strips in the correct order. She asked him how he knew which went first. While Bert recognized the words well enough to sequence, his answer led to a brief discussion on capitals and periods. They made the next two sentences into phrase strips and Bert practiced sequencing and reading these.

For a home assignment between their sessions, Shirley asked Bert to practice reading the language experience story in unison with the tape. She also asked him to read and sequence the phrase strips they had made from the first three sentences. She numbered these on the backs so that he could check them himself. (Because Bert did not have anyone to help him at home, Shirley did not ask him to practice his words from the cards. She was concerned that he might look at the cards while saying the wrong word.) Over the next month, Shirley found that as Bert learned frequently used words such as *at, is, and of,* he could read a greater number of words in each story. She realized that it was now possible for Bert to learn to read a whole story and she encouraged him to do so. When he ran into difficulties with a word, Shirley supported him by asking him to think about what he had read and what word would make sense. They kept all of his stories and would sometimes go back and read them together. Bert became more and more capable of reading independently and he felt pleased by his evident progress.

Building Confidence with Sight Words

The language experience stories you and your student create will contain the frequently used words which are often referred to as sight words. These are words which must be recognized "by sight", rather than "figured out", before fluent reading can occur. Small words such as *of, have, went, a,* and *the* account for a major portion of our spoken and hence our written language. In addition to these sight words, your student will want to choose other words to learn by sight, perhaps words about his work and his family. One way of memorizing these words is to use wordcards or flashcards.

"Sight words" is a broad category which includes:
1) frequently used words which can not be sounded out, e.g., *eye, of, was;*

2) frequently used words which can be sounded out, e.g., *him, when, at;* and

3) words which your student uses frequently or which he considers particularly important.

SOME COMMON SIGHT WORDS

Sight words should always be taught from a context, not as isolated words. The list below can help you decide which words to select from your student's stories to teach as sight words.

about
above
after
again
age
all
already
also
although
am
an
are
around
any
as
ask
away

back
be
because
been
before
began
best
big
book
boy
but
by

call
came
can
car
children
city
could

day
did
didn't
do
does

don't
door
down

each
end
enough
ever
every
eye

face
family
far
feet
find
first
five
for
found
four
free
friend
from

gave
get
girl
give
go
gone
good
got

had
hand
has
have
he
head
help
her
here
his

home
house
how

I'm
if
in
is
it
it's
its

job
just

keep
kind
knew
know

land
large
last
later
let
life
light
like
little
long
look
love

make
make
man
many
may
me
men
might
minute
Miss
money

more
morning
most
mother
Mr.
Mrs.
Ms.
much
must
my

name
never
new
next
night
no
not
nothing
now
number

of
off
often
old
on
once
one
open
or
other
our
out
over

people
place
please
play
put

question
quite

really
red
right
room

said
same
saw
say
school
see
she
should
show
sit
small
so
some
something
sometimes
soon
start
such
sure

table
take
tell
than
that
the
their
them
then
there
these
they
thing
think
this
thought
three
through
time
to
today
together
told
too
town
true
two

under
up
us
use

very

want
was
water
we
week
well
went
were
what
when
where
which
who
why
will
with
woman
women
work
world
would

year
yet
you
young
your

When you and your student are selecting words for him to learn by sight, it is important to choose only a few. Too many may be difficult to learn at one time and may be discouraging for the student. Start with about five words.

1.Write the words on individual cards as your student says the words and names the letters.

2.When the cards are made, read one word at a time and have the student repeat each word after you.

3.Ask the student to close his eyes and make a mental picture of the word. When he opens his eyes he should look at the word to check that his mental image was correct.

4.Ask him what the most difficult part of the word is and then discuss ways that he might remember it.

5.Although the intent at this point is not to spell the words, it may help the student to recognize the word if he prints it while saying each letter aloud. Some students find it helps to trace the word on the card using their finger.

Whenever your student can recognize a word easily, it can be taken out of the group and set aside for periodic review. When a word is put in the review pile, a new word from his current language experience story can be added to the words he is learning.

(The words that your student learns to recognize easily can be referred to when you are teaching the sounds that letters represent. Chapter 5 on Word Attack Skills deals with teaching phonics using language experience.)

Keeping Your Student Interested

When you and your student are working on sight words you will probably find that a great deal of practice is necessary. Your student will need many opportunities to see and say the word before it can be easily and quickly identified. It can be difficult to provide practice and more practice, review and more review without lowering your student's enthusiasm for the task.

The following suggestions may help you to vary your presentation and keep boredom at bay:

- Spread wordcards on the table. When you read a word the student points to the card. (This is easier for the student than reading the cards and so it is a good way to start a group of new words).

- Ask the student to write the words in alphabetical order or in order from the longest to the shortest word.

- Break the words into syllables and print each syllable on a separate card. Have the student select the correct cards to form the words.

week	end
con	wake
peo	test
a	ple

- Ask your student to explain how he would teach someone else to recognize the word. The student should make mention of what is difficult about the word and how to remember it.

- Read to your student from a newspaper for adults who are beginning to read or from the daily newspaper and then have him go through the article circling

the sight words that he knows. Saying the word while circling it gives additional practice.

- Have the student use each word in a written sentence. The student may write the sentence independently or if this is too difficult, he may dictate the sentence for you to write.

- Write the words in phrases, using words the student already knows. The phrases can be put on cards and used for future drills. Ask your student to help think up the phrases.

- List the words at the top of the page and make fill-in-the-blank sentences. The student then chooses the correct word to fill in the blank and make a meaningful sentence.

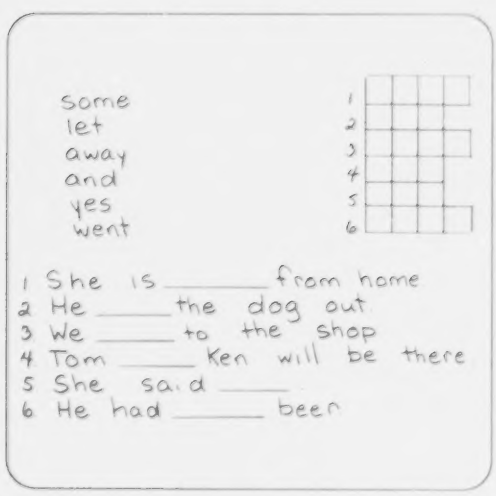
want, give, will, some

1. He_____go. **3. I have _____.**

2._____it to me. **4. I ____ to see it.**

- Have your student dictate the words for you to spell. After you have written them, he can read and mark them.

Construct a simple puzzle such as this one:



Caution: Avoid scrambled letter games as they may make it difficult for your student to keep a clear picture of how the word should be spelled.

Why Language Experience Works

The language experience approach has many advantages. This chapter has shown how language experience can be used in the teaching of reading. Chapter 6 will show its use in the teaching of writing. Language experience works because:

- it makes the student the centre of the curriculum;

- the content is directly relevant to the learner;

- it uses words that have special power and meaning to the learner;

- it uses written vocabulary and syntax that are part of the learner's vocabulary and language pattern, clearly illustrating the link between spoken and written English;

- it provides for the creation of a "dialogical" relationship where the student and teacher become co-learners and where both parties are actively and creatively involved;

- it treats the learners and their experiences with respect;

- it results in greater and more immediate success;

- it allows students to articulate and confront their insecurities about learning and life;

- it provides the learner with an approach and environment different from that associated with his or her unsuccessful school experiences;

- it produces compelling and original readings at the learner's appropriate language level;

- it allows students and teachers to place their primary attention on communication and self-expression.

from: *Adult Basic Literacy Curriculum Guide*, Ministry of Job Training and Advanced Education, Victoria, BC, 1987, p. 27.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. You and your student, a non-reader, have just written the following language experience story:

> *When I was a kid we lived near an open field. All the kids in the neighbourhood loved to play there. I remember one night we were having such a good time that we forgot all about going home. At 10:00 our parents finally found us! Boy, did we get in trouble.*

Make a list of the activities you might use to help your student read this story. Consider what words you will suggest be learned as sight words and how you will help him to learn them.

2. Practice taking down a language experience story by having a friend or family member dictate a story to you. (Remember, legible printing is important).

HELPING ADULTS LEARN TO READ

When Jean began her tutorial sessions she was able to name all the letters of the alphabet and she was able to read a few words from signs such as stop, sale and some small words such as a, the, and he. Although she could not read more than this, when a story or newspaper article was read to her she correctly answered questions and had no trouble discussing the content.

When Diane's children entered school she decided to learn to read so that she could look for work to contribute to the family's income.

At her first tutorial session, she read aloud and had few difficulties with word recognition. However, she explained to her tutor that she usually could not remember what she read and did not feel as though she understood it.

Jean and Diane have different types of reading problems. Jean needs to focus on decoding or word recognition skills. Her understanding of what is read to her is a strength on which to build these skills. Diane has relatively good word recognition skills, but she has difficulty understanding what she reads. She needs to work primarily on improving her reading comprehension.

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter will help you to answer these questions:

- **How do I create a reading program for a non-reader?**
- **How do I use material from real life to teach reading?**
- **What are essential reading habits and how can I help my student to acquire them?**
- **What needs to be considered when designing questions for reading?**
- **How can I help someone to understand what she reads?**
- **How can I help my student to read more fluently?**

TECHNIQUES FOR TUTORING A NON-READER

Dealing with Print

As readers, we take many aspects of reading for granted or think of them as natural. However, if we consider reading in Chinese, where each symbol represents a word, and reading is usually from top to bottom, not left to right, we can see that much of what we consider natural in reading English is really learned.

If you are tutoring a non-reader such as Jean, you should make sure that your student knows:

- that reading is done from left to right and that we read from the top of the page to the bottom;
- that letters represent sounds and are grouped together to represent words;
- that a sentence is made up of words and that every line of words is not necessarily a sentence.

This information should be a part of reading instruction. You can do this by pointing to words as you read them and saying each word when you print it. This emphasizes the connection between the spoken and printed word and the fact that in our language we read from left to right. When you are reading to or with your student, mention the number of sentences the paragraph has and point out the capitals and periods. In this way you can introduce the concept of a sentence and the punctuation conventions we use.

Teaching What Students Want to Learn

At each tutorial session you will want to work with a variety of materials and approaches to reading. The variety will keep the lessons interesting and help both of you discover what works for the student. Usually it is a bit difficult at first, but as you and your student become better acquainted, you will find it easier to select materials which follow up on her interests and she will probably begin to make more suggestions about what is useful to her.

Language Experience

Most students enjoy seeing their own words in print. Language experience stories are often the focus of first sessions with a non-reader. The stories can provide the basis for learning letter and sound relationships. They can also provide words to learn by memory or sight using wordcards. Because the student is learning to recognize words taken from sentences she herself has made, she can use the meaning to figure out what a word should say. Encourage your student to put what she is learning about letter-sounds together with what she knows about the meaning of the sentence in order to guess when she doesn't know a word. By doing this, she will be employing the same strategies that good readers use when they come across unfamiliar words. (See Chapters 3 and 5).

Language experience is a valuable strategy for teaching the basics of reading since it draws upon events from the student's everyday life. These events often provide ready sources of reading materials.

Using Real Life Materials

At your first session, spend time talking about the times and places where the student feels that lack of reading skills are a major problem. Your student might mention grocery shopping, bank-

ing or similar situations. Once she has identified some problem areas you should begin to work on at least one of these right away.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

- supermarket flyers
- food package labels
- restaurant menus
- telephone books
- recipes
- utility and credit card bills
- classified ads
- letters
- movie ads
- hobby information
- application forms
- TV guides
- bank forms
- bank machines
- bus schedules
- directions for taking medicine
- maps and street signs
- school notices
- road signs
- driver's guide

Using Everyday Materials: A Case Study

These lessons on banking formed part of Jean and Bev's tutorial sessions.
Jean's goal with banking was to be able to write out cheques. She already had a bank account so she and Bev decided to use the cheques which her bank issued. They started by looking at the cheques, reading the words and making a list of all the things Jean needed to know in order to write a cheque. They then checked off the ones which Jean already knew.

Words to Read	Pay to the order of dollars (own name and address) ✓
Words to Write	numbers signature ✓ names of stores date

Because the bank form itself provided the context clues, by the end of the session they were also able to check off "dollars" and "Pay to the order of."

They discussed writing the date. Jean felt it would take a long time to learn to spell the whole word so they began to work on reading the whole word and spelling just the abbreviations. During this work it became apparent that Jean was not one hundred percent sure about the sequence of the months. To deal with this, Bev brought in a calendar and they spent part of several sessions going over the months and the seasons as well as identifying in which months important events occurred (e.g., Christmas, Easter, family member's birthdays). This provided many opportunities for Jean to read and write the abbreviations for the months. She arranged wordcards of the months into the correct sequence, she grouped them according to the season, she bought a calendar and printed in important dates to remember and she printed the months which Bev dictated. When Jean could easily recognize the months and could spell the abbreviations, they went back to their original list and checked off "date".

Then they began to tackle numbers. These were easy to practice at home because Jean could check the wordcards by looking at the number on the back. First she learned to read and write the numbers from 1 to 10. Jean practiced writing the numbers by tracing them from a sheet which Bev wrote out for her. Because writing was new to Jean, it took several sessions before she could recognize and write the first 10 numbers. When she had mastered this, she began to write them in spelling dictations.

After Jean had learned to spell the num-

bers from 1 to 10, they went on to other numbers, taking them as groups according to their similarities (e.g., teens, tys). Bev began to show Jean how the numbers were combined to represent all the numbers from 1 to 99. She printed, and later wrote, numbers on paper and arranged wordcards so that Jean had practice reading twenty-one, fifty-six, etc. When Jean could read them easily, Bev dictated them to her.

Jean was delighted with her ability to learn to read and write these numbers. She was even more pleased when she discovered that by learning hundred, she could read and write all the numbers from 1 to 999. They ticked off "numbers" on the list.

The only thing remaining on the list was names of stores. Jean had wanted to learn to write cheques primarily for grocery shopping, so they worked on the names of the grocery stores that she shopped at most frequently. But she also felt that she would like to be able to write cheques at other stores. They talked about how she might do this and came up with these suggestions.

-Jean could ask if the store had a stamp for its name.

- She could copy the name from the flyer before she went to the store.

- She could read and copy the name from the store sign before she went to the cash counter.

- She could ask the clerk to spell it for her or to fill it in.

When Jean felt that she was ready to write cheques, they used part of the session to take stock of what she had learned while working on cheque writing. She had learned to read the months, print the months in abbreviations, read and write the numbers 1 to 999 and read the words on a cheque. She had also learned the sequence of the months, how to read and use a calendar and she had begun to learn handwriting.

At the next session Jean reported that she had paid for the groceries by cheque. She said she had felt extremely nervous, but she did it and felt great.

JEANS' CHEQUE

1 July 19 19 88

Pay to the Order of: Martin Grocery Store

Twenty-five 32/100 Dollars $ 25.32

Memo: Goods Jean Fraser

Simplifying Reading Material

Language experience stories and everyday reading tasks are good sources of material. High interest, low vocabulary books written for adults who are learning to read are valuable resources, too. (See Resources section for list of publishers.) But you may want to create additional materials to suit your student's particular needs and interests. This can be done by simplifying articles or stories to lower the reading level. Rewriting to simplify is a time-consuming task, so make certain before you begin that the article is one which your student will want to read and possibly keep as a reference.

There are five steps to follow:

1. Look for the main ideas and important details. Write these down so that you can check afterwards to make sure they are still included.
2. Analyze the sentences to see if you can simplify them by a) breaking them into shorter sentences, b) leaving out unimportant details, c) rewriting them using simpler words and simpler sentence structure.
3. Identify words which are essential to the subject and which should be taught rather than substituted.
4. Add familiar examples to help make new ideas or concepts more concrete.
5. Change the passive voice to the active voice;

e.g., The bill *was passed* in the legislature.
The *Members of Parliament voted* to make the bill a law.

SPECIAL FEATURE

An Example of Rewriting

THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE: HOME FREEZING

Home freezing, a comparatively simple method for food preservation, can provide you with an individualized supermarket. However, some enthusiastic frozen food fans expect fabulous results from freezing, without paying the necessary regard to food quality or preparation. The following recommendations, both general and specific, will assist you.

- Suitable foods must be selected. Freezing can only retain the quality of food; it cannot improve it.
- Cool cooked foods rapidly.
- Seal in moisture with vapor- proof wrappings.
- Wrap securely to create an airtight package. The best materials are heavy-duty aluminum foil, heavy-weight plastic wrap and freezer bags.
- Maintain a constant storage temperature of 0 degrees or colder.

THE SIMPLIFIED ARTICLE: HOME FREEZING

It is not hard to freeze food. Here are a few tips to help you.

- Use good quality food.
- After you have cooked foods, cool them quickly.
- Wrap food so air will not get in. It is best to use thick foil, plastic wrap or freezer bags.
- Keep the freezer at 0 degrees or colder.

Involving your student in simplifying articles ensures that the finished product will be one that she can understand. It can also provide practice in vocabulary building, identifying main ideas and supporting details and summarizing.

Read the article to your student. Go over any unfamiliar vocabulary and, where appropriate, find more familiar synonyms to use. Discuss the main ideas and important details and ask your student to put these into her own words. You can write it down for her. To complete it, read the article over together and make any changes that seem necessary.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING READING FLUENCY

The degree to which students can read fluently can affect their reading comprehension. As soon as students can decode, that is recognize words correctly, it may be valuable to give some attention to fluency.

Modelling

Provide a model of fluent reading by first reading the material to your student while she reads along silently, and then have her read it to you. This can be done by reading a paragraph at a time or several paragraphs, depending on what helps to make the student feel comfortable.

Repeat Reading

After you have modelled the reading, encourage your student to go over the same material until she feels that she can read it easily. This can be done between sessions if you record the material and she takes the tape and a copy of the reading home for listening and practicing.

Echo Reading

One way of improving a student's fluency is by echo reading. This method will help your student to hear the relationship between oral and written language as well as to improve her reading fluency. Here is how to use echo reading:

a) Choose reading material which is at the student's instructional level.

b) Together read the selection aloud. You should read at a normal rate, using expression and paying attention to punctuation. Have the student read along with you, trying to keep up.

c) Point to the words as you read them. This will help the student to keep up and not lose her place.

d) Keep reading at a normal rate, even if the student hesitates over a word or falls slightly behind. If the student falls too far behind, slow your pace down until she is reading with you again.

e) If the student keeps up with little effort, choose more difficult material to offer a challenge. If the student has a lot of trouble keeping up, choose easier material.

f) Do not stop and correct the student or attempt to teach the sounds of the word or word recognition.

g) Do not ask any questions to see if the

student understood the story. The student will not have been able to concentrate on content and practice fluent oral reading at the same time.

h) Try spending about 5 to 10 minutes at each tutoring session using this method. After a few times, the student will find it easier to keep up with you. If your student has a tape recorder, you can tape material so that your student can practice echo reading at home by reading along with the tape. This method helps the student hear the relationship between oral and written language and improves her fluency.

Caution
Echo reading can be an uncomfortable exercise for students until they become used to it. Do not use echo reading until you and your student have become well acquainted and your student is ready and willing to try new things.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION

Reading for Meaning

When you are working with a student who recognizes words quite easily and reads fairly fluently, it is important not to assume that she understands what she reads. Comprehension can be hindered by a limited vocabulary or unfamiliarity with the topic of the materials. Understanding might also be limited by the student's lack of awareness that reading involves more than just recognizing words.

Your student may be the first one to identify that there is a comprehension problem. Like Diane, many beginning readers say that they do not remember what they have read at the beginning of the page by the time they get to the bottom. Apart from a few special cases, this is not a memory problem, but a lack of necessary reading strategies to process what they are reading. A comparison between the tactics used by proficient readers and those used by poor readers shows differences in strategies for getting meaning from print.

Good readers assume that what they are reading will make some sense. As they read they look for meaning and interpret the text. Good readers notice when they do not understand something -- a word, a phrase, an idea -- and may decide to reread preceding sentences to see if there is information which can help them. They may also choose to read on to see if the difficulty will be clarified. After reading further, they return to check that the problem is resolved or they may decide that the word is not important to their overall understanding and simply continue reading. When they have finished, good readers usually review and think about what they have read.

Poor readers tend not to construct meaning from what they read as they read it. Frequently, poor readers do not take notice when they have read something which they did not understand. They may continue reading without solving the problems which they have encountered. The problems accumulate and consequently poor readers often arrive at the end of the reading passage without knowing what they have read. Because they have not been aware of their own reading processing, it is only when they come to a full stop that it becomes apparent that it has not been *meaning*-ful reading. The difficulties poor readers have often stem from their conception of reading: they see reading

as a word recognition task rather than as a process of getting meaning from print.

It is possible to teach students to build meaning as they read and to recognize when they don't understand. There are strategies that can help resolve reading comprehension problems. These strategies are described below, as they were used by Lynn with her student, Diane.

Strategies That Improve Comprehension

Diane's description of her reading difficulties were confirmed by the initial reading and discussion which she did with her tutor, Lynn. They talked about the problems and they decided to begin work using the daily newspaper. Lynn began by showing Diane how to preview before she started to read.

Previewing

Previewing reading material is important because it helps students to activate what they already know about the subject. New ideas and information can be understood more easily if prior knowledge has been brought to the foreground of the reader's thoughts, ready for use in interpreting and judging the printed message.

1. Read the headline.

2. Think about the probable subject of the article.

3. Review what you already know about the topic.

4. Develop a focus for reading by making up a question based on the title.

5. Read the first paragraph of the article and if necessary, reformulate your question.

6. Read the last paragraph of the article.

Diane and Lynn worked together on previewing for several sessions. At one session, Lynn cut out headlines from the newspaper and brought just the headlines. Diane read the headlines and predicted what the content of the article would be. At another session they used previewing to help Diane decide which newspaper article she would be interested in reading. In all of the reading they did together, Lynn reminded Diane to read the headline or title and take time to think about the topic. Diane also practiced previewing at home and gained confidence that she could do it independently.

Self-Monitoring

When Lynn introduced self-monitoring, she explained that Diane should monitor her own understanding while she was reading. Lynn suggested that a reader should always have the question "Do I understand?" in mind when reading. To help her learn how to self-monitor, Lynn interrupted Diane's reading frequently.

Lynn stopped Diane after each paragraph or, if it was a long paragraph, after every few sentences and asked her to paraphrase what she had read. On occasions when Diane had difficulty doing this they referred back to the article and Diane read it again. At this point she could usually use her own words to explain what she had read. On the few occasions when she couldn't, they examined the sentences to see where the problem was (e.g., vocabulary) and sorted it out before proceeding.

Sometimes when Lynn interrupted Diane's reading it was to ask her what she thought would be coming up next. This was another way of helping Diane to think about what she was reading. Diane was surprised by the difference stopping to paraphrase and predict made in how much she remembered at the end

of the page. Thinking and talking about what she read helped her reading comprehension.

Reflecting

While Diane continued to practice previewing and self-monitoring, they began to work on reflecting. After reading it is important to think about what has been read in order to remember and make use of the ideas or information. To understand we need to associate new information with old. We need to make decisions about accuracy, validity, usefulness and so on, in relation to our prior knowledge. Lynn encouraged Diane to think about what she had read by asking her some of the following questions:

- Did the content of the article match what you thought it would be when you previewed it?
- Can you tell me in your own words what it is about?
- What do you think the author's main point was?
- Did you come across new ideas? Do the ideas challenge or fit in with what you already know?

This summing up after reading helped Diane to "hang on" to the ideas and information. Remembering was no longer a problem. She found she could now answer questions and talk about what she read.

Asking Questions

Much of the information we get from what we read is not actually stated in print. We use what is explicitly stated together with our own experience and knowledge to read between the lines and infer the author's meaning. Poor or inexperienced readers may only be reading at the surface or literal level. Questions can play an important role in guiding your student to understand the written words at a deeper level. At first, you should pose questions to guide your student's reading. The type of reading questions you ask can help you identify your student's problem areas. Determining where the trouble areas are can be a guide to planning future lessons. Later, the student can ask her own questions to guide her reading, much as she did at the previewing stage. A list of useful questions and their related purposes are shown on the following page.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR ORAL READING

Oral reading can give you information about the strengths and weaknesses in your student's reading. It can also be an opportunity to help your student practice good reading habits.

Some Guidelines For Oral Reading.

- Give the student the opportunity to practice before she reads to you. Repeated silent reading will help both word recognition and comprehension and it will make her oral reading a more successful experience.

- Don't interrupt as soon as the student makes an error. Allow time for her to read further and use the sentence or paragraph meaning to recognize and correct the errors.

- Correct only significant errors, i.e., those errors which alter or confuse the meaning. The goal is not to have perfect word-by-word reading, but to have a good understanding.

QUESTIONS THAT HELP COMPREHENSION

You are helping your student to:	If you ask:
identify the main idea	What is a good title for this story (article)? What is the author's main point? What is the main idea of this paragraph?
sequence events	What did they do when...? What steps did they take when..? What happened after...? Can you arrange these events in the order in which they happened? If we wanted to make this, what steps would we follow?
notice and locate details	Can you find the place where the author tells us...? When did this happen? How much...? How far...?
predict outcome and draw conclusion	What do you think will happen when...? What will they do next? How do you think this will affect...? If you were writing the next chapter, what would you say happened to_____?
evaluate content	Does the author give much evidence to support his view? Do you think they were right to...? What are the author's information sources? What are some ideas (facts, points, of view) that the author left out? Do you think this could really happen?
understand text organization	What things does the author compare? What does the author say causes...? How many items are in the author's list of...? Why does the author tell us the time before each event?

Special Feature

Hints on Question Writing

Writing questions on reading material and having your student formulate answers in writing can be a useful home assignment. The questions can help the student to understand what she's reading and the answers can help you to locate any problem areas.

Here are some suggestions for designing written questions.

- Your questions should be written in words which are easy for the student to read.
- Avoid constructing questions which can be answered with a yes or no or by copying sentences from the reading passage.
- Ask questions which require the student to draw conclusions, evaluate and reflect. These questions can help her to think about what she is reading.
- Don't ask "trick" questions. They will frustrate the student without giving you any information about her understanding.
- Use written questions sparingly. If you ask too many questions, you will take the enjoyment out of reading.

- Encourage the student to use the meaning of what she is reading, together with letter sound clues to make guesses about unfamiliar words.
- Don't belabour the point. It is a good idea to tell your student the word she is having difficulty recognizing if it threatens to frustrate her or cause the meaning to be lost.
- Acknowledge success. Encourage the student to talk about how she figured out what she read.
- Be aware that oral reading makes some students extremely uncomfortable. In this case avoid oral reading as much as possible or try alternatives such as having her record her reading at home so that you may listen to it later when you are not with her.

Reading to Your Student

Reading to your student can provide a pleasant change of pace to the lesson. Choose articles which expand on an interest your student has or ask her to suggest a topic or story type. You can devote 10 or 15 minutes of your session to reading to her. Tutor reading gives an opportunity to informally model good reading habits.

- Preview by sharing what you both already know about the topic.
- Encourage self-monitoring by asking her to stop you whenever she doesn't understand an idea or a word.
- Reflect by talking about what you have read together and ask her opinion of the article or the story.

TECHNIQUES FOR CHOOSING READING MATERIAL

The level of reading difficulty of material is called its readability. There are methods of assessing the grade level of material, but it is more important to assess readability in terms of the reader, your student. In this sense, three general levels of readability are usually considered: independent, instructional and frustration.

At the *independent* level the student can read the material without help from others. There are very few problems with word recognition or with comprehension.

At the *instructional* level the student finds the material more difficult, but it can be managed with assistance. These materials are appropriate for developing reading skills.

Material at the *frustration* level is too difficult. Using it discourages the reader and creates anxiety.

What to Look for

These things make material more difficult to read:

- multi-syllable words;
- sentences with complicated structure (e.g., Silently, without touching the furniture or awakening the cat, the burglar slipped away);
- words which the student can't recognize easily (by sight);
- vocabulary which is new to the student;
- new ideas, particularly when presented with unfamiliar examples.

Assessing the Fit

To assess the level of difficulty your student has with material, select a passage with approximately 100 words and ask your student to read it, first silently and then orally. As she reads, keep track of the number of errors she makes.

- less than 5 errors - independent level
- 5 to 10 errors - instructional level
- more than 10 errors - frustration level

As an article or book can vary in difficulty, you should try this at the beginning, middle and end to get an overall sense of reading level. Once she has learned it, the student can use this method as a guide whenever selecting reading material.

Take Note

Your student may find seemingly difficult material relatively easy if:

- she is familiar with the multi-syllable words (e.g., British Columbia);
- she is interested and knowledgeable about the topic;
- you provide the opportunity to discuss the subject before reading it, and fill in gaps in her background knowledge.

Readers vary. Your student may be comfortable with more or fewer errors. Ask your student how she feels about the reading she is doing.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1.You have selected this article to help your student work on reading comprehension. Write questions which will require that she a) identify the main idea and b) evaluate the ideas presented.

2. Try your hand at simplifying articles by choosing an article from a newspaper and rewriting it at a lower reading level.

3. Your student reads at the same level as Bev's student, Jean. he would like to learn to read the movie page in the newspaper. Use movie ads from a newspaper to construct a lesson.

Inuit students find out about their roots

This spring some students from the Northwest Territories (NWT) visited China. The students are Inuit. They went to meet the Mongolian people of China. They called their trip "Back to Our Roots."

Scientists think the native people of North America came from Asia. They probably walked across a land bridge about 20,000 years ago.

The children said northern China looks like northern Canada. Both places have hills, grass and no trees.

Jamie Taipanna, 11, went on the trip. He saw many interesting things. He watched a Mongolian hunter cut deer meat. Taipanna said the hunter's knife was just like an Inuit knife. The Inuit knife is called an *ulu*. It has a crescent shape.

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HELPING ADULTS LEARN WORD ATTACK SKILLS

When my son was littler I used to just make up a story that went with the pictures. But now he's older and he knows the stories because he hears them from other people. He says, 'No, Dad, that's not the way it goes. Read what it really says.' But if I try, it's so slow for him and I don't get all the words right. I think he knows something's wrong. I'm afraid he's going to think his dad is dumb.

Paul, literacy student

I always have trouble with the big words. The little words are OK, but the big words really get me. It's like coming up against a wall. That's how I think of it, like a wall.

John, literacy student

Beginning readers do not have the variety of techniques to use in figuring out what a word "says". In Chapter 4 you read about using wordcards to help students remember words. Memorizing the whole word is one word attack method. This chapter will describe additional techniques to help students deal independently with the unfamiliar words they encounter.

EXPECTATIONS

In this chapter we will look at the strategies and techniques needed to answer these questions:

- **What is meant by the term word attack skills?**
- **What are the components of a word attack program?**
- **What are phonics and word families?**
- **What is a context clue?**
- **What is structural analysis?**
- **How do I teach the student to use a dictionary?**
- **How can I help build the student's vocabulary?**

TEACHING A VARIETY OF WORD ATTACK SKILLS

If you are concerned at this point because you don't remember ever learning phonics and you don't know what a context clue is, don't worry. You **do** know how to read, which means that you have used and continue to use word attack skills. It's a bit like tying your shoe. It's so automatic that it is hard to think about all the separate steps involved. This chapter will help you to teach your students different methods of word attack.

As you read this chapter, bear in mind the following points:

- The purpose of word attack skills is to help the student get meaning from the printed page, not to achieve perfection with rules or the reading of isolated words.
- Different techniques are useful with different words. For example, you cannot use phonics to sound out the word eye. You must memorize that eye says /i/. Students should be encouraged to be flexible and to use a variety of approaches and combinations of approaches.
- Different people find different techniques more or less difficult to learn. Help your student to be aware of what works best for him.
- Words are learned most easily if they are within a context which has meaning. That is, words in a sentence are easier to recognize than the same words in isolation. When words are isolated for more detailed examination, return them to a context as soon as possible.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING CONTEXT CLUES

Using context clues refers to using the context surrounding an unknown word to get information to help identify what a word says or means. Students who are reading for the first time usually use context clues primarily to recognize a word whose meaning they already know.

When your student comes to a word which he does not know, suggest that he read on and return to the word to see if the rest of the sentence can help him to figure out the word.

When he is first encouraged to use context clues, he may feel very uncomfortable about it. He may feel that "guessing" is cheating; it isn't *really* reading. Assure him that good readers use this technique and that learning to do this is a part of learning to read. Explain that it involves more than just guessing. To use context it is necessary to use the meaning of the sentence and what he knows about the letters in the word to establish what the word could be.

Normal reading practice will provide opportunities to use context clues. You should stress that visual clues, e.g., the first letters of the word, should be used along with the sentence meaning. Using all the information in this way makes the reader less likely to substitute a word

which could alter the meaning of the sentence.

When he finds that this technique really does lead him to identify the word correctly, he will become more convinced of its value. Constructing cloze exercises will give him additional practice in using context clues.

Cloze Passages

The term cloze is related to closure. Closure refers to the human tendency to see things as wholes, even if parts are missing. Because the goal of reading is to get meaning, readers fill in gaps using information they already have about words and about the topic. Cloze passages can provide the student with valuable practice in using context clues.

A standard cloze exercise is made in the following way.

1) Select a reading passage.

2) Leave the first sentence intact.

3) Delete every subsequent fifth word.

4) Retype the article to make each blank a standard size.

Cloze exercises can be modified in a number of ways, such as deleting every nth word or leaving in initial sounds, prefixes or some other word part. Retaining some part of the word encourages the student to use other clues along with the sentence meaning. Cloze can also be used to help teach, for example, long vowels by omitting the vowels, or prefixes by leaving out only the prefixes.

Deleting fewer words makes the task easier; deleting every eighth or ninth word is usually appropriate. Remember, there may be more than one correct word. Your student may choose another word which has the same meaning as the original one.

EXAMPLE OF A MODIFIED CLOZE EXERCISE

*Halloween is October 31.
It is a special day for ch____. On Halloween children dress up. They w____costumes. They go to houses in th_____neighborhood. The children knock on doors. Th____ shout, "Trick or Treat!" People give c_____, cookies and fruit to the children.

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TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING PHONICS

Teaching the Letter-Sound System

Many students lack strategies for figuring out words which they have not already memorized. Phonics can help students to tackle unfamiliar words and can be a stepping stone to independent reading.

Your phonics instruction may be based on language experience stories, it may be a response to particular difficulties

which arise in the student's reading or it may be a structured program in which you introduce letter sounds first and then integrate them with other reading work. Whichever the case, your instruction should incorporate the same elements. Students should:

- practice visually recognizing the letter or letters which represent the sound;
- practice hearing the sound and distinguishing it from other letter sounds;
- practice saying the sound while printing or writing the letter(s);
- choose a "key word", that is, a word which will help them to remember the letter-sound relationship.

Phonics: The Basics

The alphabet consists of consonants and vowels.

Consonants

The consonants are: b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y (at the beginning of a syllable) z.

Consonant Blends
When the sounds for two or three consonant letters are pronounced rapidly, the sounds are referred to as a consonant blend.

Consonant blends can occur at the beginning of words:

l blends - **bl**ack, **gl**ad, **cl**am, **pl**an, **fl**ag, **sl**am
r blends - **br**ag, **fr**ank, **tr**ack, **cr**ab, **dr**ag, **gr**ab, **pr**im
s blends - **sc**an, **sm**ell, **sn**ack, **sp**an, **st**ab, **sw**am, **sk**ill
w blends - **dw**ell, **tw**ig

Consonant blends can also occur at the end of words:

st - li**st**
nd - se**nd**
nt - de**nt**
mp - ca**mp**
ft- cra**ft**
lk - e**lk**
sk - ri**sk**
sp - cla**sp**
ct - fa**ct**
nk - tha**nk**

Consonant Digraphs
When two consonant letters represent one sound they are called a consonant digraph.

ck - ta**ck**
sh - **sh**ip
ch (tch) - pea**ch** (ma**tch**)
wh - **wh**en
th - **th**ank, **th**e
ng - si**ng**
ph - **ph**one

Silent Consonants -

b - com**b**
g - **g**narl
k - **k**not
w - **w**rite

Vowels

The vowels are: a e i o u y (in the middle or at the end of a syllable)
Vowels make a variety of sounds.

Short Vowels
a - **a**pple
e - **e**nd
i - **i**gloo
o - **o**x
u - **u**p

Schwa - In many words the short vowels in unstressed syllables are sounded as u as in at'**l**as, pur'**p**ose, cam'**e**l. This is called a schwa sound and is marked with an upside-down 'e'.

Long Vowels
a - ace
e - meet
i - ice
o - rope
u - use
(long u often sounds /oo/ as in rule)

Vowel Combinations

A
ai - rain
au - August
ay - day
aw - saw
all - call
alk - walk

E
ee - beef
ei - receive/ veil
eigh - neighbour
ey - money obey
ea - tea head break
ew - few

I
ie - die field
ild - mild
ind - find
igh - night
ign - sign

O
oi - boil
oy - boy
oa - boat
ow - cow row
ou - house country group thought could shoulder
oo - look moon
oe - toe

Teaching a Consonant Sound: A Case Study

Paul, a non-reader, was learning the single consonant sounds. At one of their initial sessions his tutor, Yvonne, was using language experience to teach the /l/ sound.

PAUL'S STORY

Pat and I have lived in our house for five years. We moved in just before our son was born. We like the neighbourhood a lot.

After they had read the story several times, Yvonne pointed to the word *like*. Paul knew that the first letter was named 'l'. She asked Paul to listen carefully to the first sound as she repeated the word several times. Then she gave him other examples of words beginning with this sound: *little, lemon, lottery, lettuce*. She asked him if he could think of words which began with this sound. He came up with *letter* and *lesson*.

Yvonne then explained that she was going to say some words and he should listen and tell her if the word began with /l/ or another sound. The words were: *lesson, learning, habit, Lorne, yellow. clay, lease, dream, leprechaun, land, frame.*

Paul had difficulty with only one word, *clay*. Yvonne printed the word and said that he was correct in that the word had the /l/ sound, but it was not the first sound.

This seemed like a good time to introduce key words. Yvonne explained that a key word was one that could be used to help sound out a word or, in spelling, to help you know if a letter was in that word. She gave *lake* as an example of a key word for /l/. If she were trying to sound

out *leg* (she printed this) she would say the word *lake*, to remind herself of the sound that /l/ makes.

Paul chose *Lynn* as his key word. He felt he would remember this because it was his sister's name.

Yvonne again said a mixture of words beginning with /l/ and with other sounds and Paul used his key word to help him whenever he was unsure.

At the end of their lesson, Yvonne read a short article from the daily paper to Paul. After they had talked about the event, Paul circled all the words which began with 'l'. Yvonne read the circled words to him while pointing to them.

For a home assignment Yvonne asked Paul to copy down words that contained the letter 'l' from signs he saw, and to practice printing the letter 'l' in upper and lower case letters. She also asked him to bring in a small photo of his sister, so that they could make an 'l' consonant card with it.

They began the next session by making a consonant card using the photo of Paul's sister, Lynn. Then Paul used Lynn as a key word, to distinguish words which began with the sound /l/ from those which didn't. He found this to be quite easy.

Yvonne brought out the article they had used at the last session. She had made wordcards using the initial 'l' words which Paul had circled. She read each word and asked him to match the cards to words in the article. She asked him how he knew which 'l' word was which in order to draw his attention to other visual clues. Paul wanted to learn to read the word *Lynn* from memory, so Yvonne printed this on a card.

When they reviewed the words which Paul had copied from signs he said that he wanted to learn these from memory, too. As there were just three, Yvonne printed *alarm*, *pull* and *self-serve* on wordcards.

They did not spend the entire lesson on /l/ as Yvonne knew that it would be too boring. They read over his language experience story from the previous week and worked on it and Yvonne read a magazine article to Paul. She also printed *Lynn*, *pull*, *self-serve* and *alarm* for Paul to trace and then copy for printing practice. At the end of the lesson they reviewed his wordcards and Paul was able to read all but *self-serve*. So that he could practice the words at home, he drew pictures on the back to remind himself which word was which.

At the following lesson, Yvonne introduced /l/ in the final position, following the same method as she had when introducing it in the initial position.

Whether letters are in the initial or final place, provide opportunities to:
- identify the letter;
- hear the sound and distinguish it from other sounds;
- see, hear and say words ending with the sound of /l/;
- select a key word;
- practice using the key word.

Syllables

A syllable is a word or a part of a word with one vowel sound. Phonic patterns work only on syllables. Therefore, they apply to whole words only if the word is made up of one syllable. If the word is more than one syllable it is necessary to "break" the word into syllables before attempting to sound it out. These words have only one syllable because they have only one vowel sound:
hug haunt beat bat like toy

1. Closed syllables

These are syllables which have a single, short vowel and which end with a con-

SPECIAL FEATURE

Tips on Teaching the Alphabet

The alphabet is not easy to learn. Try learning the order of 26 unrelated things and you will see how difficult it can be. Here are some strategies to help you teach the alphabet:

1) Break the alphabet into groups of letters -a-g, h-m, n-t, and u-z to help your student tackle it in manageable steps.

2) Print the alphabet letters on separate cards for the student to practice putting in sequence, first working with the letters within one group and later trying all 26. Initially, this can be done by matching the cards and sequence to a copy of the alphabet which you have printed. The student can practice at home using this copy to verify or correct his sequence.

3) Encourage your student to practice printing the alphabet.(See next page)

4) Construct simple exercises which ask the student to fill in the blanks with the correct letter.

5) Play a version of the card game Seven Up with your student. Deal out all 26 alphabet cards. The person with 'm' starts and the players take turns laying down one card if they have the next one in the sequence either forwards or backwards, towards 'a' or 'z'.

sonant; e.g., *an, hut, inch*. Your student can be helped to read words with two or more closed syllables if you teach the syllable division rule:
When there are two consonants with a vowel on either side, divide the word into syllables between the two consonants (VC/CV); e.g., fan/tas/tic, pic/nic.

2. Silent 'e' syllables

A silent 'e' at the end of a syllable usually makes the vowel before it say its own name. With the silent 'e' syllable and the VC/CV rule the student can read a host of new words; e.g., *complete, inflate, confine, mistake*.

3. Consonant + 'le'

A consonant followed by 'le' at the end of a word always forms a syllable and the 'le' is sounded as /ul/; e.g., a/ble, gig/gle, tric/kle.

A Sequence for Teaching Phonics

The following sequence is not written in stone. You will find other, slightly different, sequences suggested in other books. As you follow your student's interests you will undoubtedly have teachable moments which will offer opportunities to explain a phonics pattern out of the sequence which is suggested here. It is also important to remember that phonic patterns are tools which are most effective when used with other word attack

The Alphabet

strategies. Nonetheless, the following sequences may help you decide the order in which to teach the phonic sounds.

1. Single Consonants

- at the beginning of words
- at the end of words

2. Short vowels

- in the middle of three letter words, e.g., mat, lit, cop

Many students have difficulty distinguishing the short 'e' from the short 'a' or 'i'. For this reason the vowels should not be taught in alphabetical order. Try a,i,o,e,u.

The teaching of consonants and vowels should be integrated, otherwise the student will have a long wait before he can begin to sound out words. Once your student has mastered some consonants you can introduce a vowel or vowels and construct words using the known consonants. The student will then be able to sound out one syllable, short vowel words and use his knowledge of consonant sounds along with context clues to help him figure out other words.

3. The silent 'e' syllable

4. Words with two or more closed syllables

5. Blends

- at the beginning of words
- at the end of words

6. Consonant Digraphs

- at the beginning of words
- at the end of words

7. Vowel Combinations (Regular)

ai,ay
ee,ea
oa,oi,oy

8. Vowel Combinations (Less Regular)

au,aw (all, alk)
ei,eigh,ey
ie (ild,ind,igh,ign)
ow, ou, oo

9. The consonant + 'le' syllable

Teaching Vowels

Vowel sounds can be difficult for students to learn. This is the case because a) the sounds are not easily distinguished, b) each letter makes a variety of sounds alone and in combination with other vowels, c) each sound is represented by a variety of letters.

Word Families

The techniques for teaching vowel sounds are the same as those used for teaching consonant sounds: provide opportunities for seeing, saying, hearing, and writing the letters and sounds and provide sufficient review. Grouping words to take advantage of similarities in spelling and in sound will help your student. These word patterns are referred to as "word families."

A word family is a group of rhyming words which have the same spelling for the part that sounds the same. Teaching phonics using word families:

- enables the student to learn an entire group of words more readily than if those same words were taught separately;

- encourages the student to look for familiar parts in unfamiliar words;

- often helps students who have difficul-

EXAMPLES OF WORD FAMILIES

an	**ipe**	**oat**	**ough (uf)**
man	pipe	boat	enough
can	ripe	coat	rough
tan	wipe	goat	tough
ran	gripe	moat	
fan	swipe	bloat	
Dan		float	
ban			

ty putting sounds together to synthesize them into a word. The reason for this is illustrated by this example: /r/-/an/ is easier to hear as a word than /r/-/a/-/n/.

- emphasizes the regular patterns of English spelling. This can help students learn even some of the seemingly irregular words, e.g., *enough, tough, rough.*

For these reasons the concept of word families can be a valuable teaching tool. This is all the more so because word families can either be listed in advance when you plan a lesson or as the occasion arises during a lesson. You need only look for words which rhyme and have common spellings. They can be used for regular word patterns or for special patterns such as *mind, kind, find.*

How to Teach Word Families

1. Choose your word family from a word your student already knows. For example, if your student can read *sun* you might begin with *un.*

2. Have the student look at the word, say it, and then identify the first sound (/s/). Ask the student what the rest of the word says (/un/). You may have to assist him to separate the sounds.

3. At the top of the page write the heading of the word family and the word underneath it.

4. Choose a consonant the student knows well to make another word and write it next in the column. Ask the student what the word is. Assist him by repeating the family ending.

5. If the student still can't read it, sound it out slowly. Say the word if the student still doesn't know it. Read the heading and the words to emphasize the rhyme.

6. Add another word and ask the student to read it. Assist him again if necessary.

7. When the student can read the words you add, ask him to add others.

If the student suggests a word which rhymes but which is not spelled the same, write it underneath a line drawn across the page near the bottom. You can say, "You've got the right sound, but this one is spelled differently."

un
sun
bun
fun
run
gun

son
done

8. Transfer the word family onto a card for future practice.

Phonics Practice

The following suggestions may help you to vary your phonics instruction and maintain your student's interest.

1. Write a short story using as many examples of the phonic pattern your student is learning as you can. Then:
a) have the student find and circle the words or
b) you can omit the words, write them on small cards and have your student fill in the blanks with the cards.

An alternative is to start with a list of words in the pattern you are teaching and work with your student to create the story together. The student can do a) or b) above at the next session.

2. Print word families but leave out the initial consonant sound(s) for your student to fill in as you dictate the words.

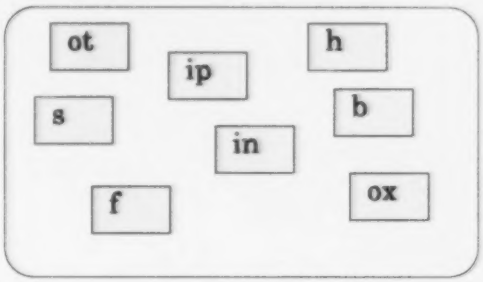
lake
_ake
_ake

This can also be done by keeping in the consonants and leaving out the vowel for practice with vowel sounds.

3. Have the student divide his page into columns, one column for each phonic pattern you want to practice and put the phonic pattern at the top of the column. Dictate words which fit the patterns. The student indicates (by check marks, by writing the initial consonants or by writing the whole word) under which column the words belong.

ake	ike	oke	ick
make	like dike	poke coke	pick

4. Print out word parts on cards and have the student find the combinations which make words. This can be done by matching initial consonants with the word family bases or matching syllables.



5. Print letters at the top of a page and ask the student to make as many words as he can using these letters.

6. Print the alphabet letters on separate cards and spread them on the table in random order, face-up. Point to a card and have the student supply the name or the name and the sound, or give the sound and have the student point to the letter and give the name.

7. Ask riddles. For example, practice the /b/ sound with riddles such as: someone who makes bread (baker), something a dog likes to chew (bone). This is a good game for a non-reader who is just learning letter sounds.

8. Play Bingo. Write words on one large card and the same words on separate small cards. The small cards are drawn at random and the student matches them with the Bingo card.

9. Work with your student to create a crossword puzzle. First write the answers, then make up the clue sentences. Later, the answers can be omitted and the puzzle can be used for a review.

10. Play tic-tac-toe but instead of using 'x' and 'o', select a consonant, consonant blend or short vowel and fill in the square with a word which uses that letter and sound.

brat	crib	brick
	cry	
	brim	

SPECIAL FEATURE

Rhyming is More Difficult Than You Might Think

Rhyming is an example of something which is often thought of as natural, but which is really something we learn. If students have never had nursery rhymes read to them as children or played rhyming games and riddles, they may not be familiar with the concept of rhyme. If this is the case, then you will need to teach rhyming before word families can be used in your phonics instruction.

1. Use one syllable words and give example of rhymes, e.g., *cat, fat, sat, rat.*

2. Ask the student to listen carefully for the ending of the word. Can he hear that each word sounds the same at the end? If he is unable to do so, point out that each word ends with /at/. Ask him to listen for /at/ as you repeat the words.

3. Supply a consonant sound, e.g., /m/, and ask him to blend /m/ with /at/ to make a new word. If he is unable to make the new word, provide it for him. Repeat this until he is able to blend the sounds to produce the rhyming word. (This can be assisted by writing the rhyming part on one card and the initial consonant on another. Move the cards together as you blend the sounds).

4. Repeat 1 - 3 above using another one-syllable rhyming group, e.g., *it, bit, sit, fit.*

5. When the student has mastered rhyming with one syllable words, go on to words with two syllables, e.g., *mitten, kitten, written, bitten.*

Practicing rhyming at each session can be fun and will reinforce the concept and increase the student's facility with it. You might review rhymes using "Which one doesn't fit?", e.g., *zipper, dipper, hippy, ripper,* or you could take turns adding a rhyming word to create a long list.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Examining the structure of words- - their prefixes, suffixes and roots -- can enable students to tackle multi-syllable words more confidently and with more success. It is a particularly valuable tool for students who have difficulty understanding and applying phonic principles. In the following case study, John and Gregg analyze the structures of words.

Prefixes

John and Greg had been working together for half a year. Now, however, after about five months of sessions which always included some phonics work, they were both getting frustrated. John had memorized new words but he still didn't know how to sound out a word if he hadn't already memorized it. In desperation, Greg put aside phonics and began to introduce structural analysis.

Greg began by saying that working on parts of words could help John break down large words into small sections so they would be easier to read. The parts they were going to look at had meanings and so this approach could also help John to know the meanings of words he hadn't run into before. Greg then began to use some words that John was already familiar with as examples of the prefix 'un'.

unhappy
unlucky
unsure

He asked John what these words meant and then what he thought 'un' meant. Because John knew the meaning of the words he was able to answer that 'un' meant 'not'. Greg asked him for more 'un' words and John came up with the following words which Greg separated into three columns:

uncut	*uncover*	*uncle*
unknown	*unbuckle*	*understand*
unable	*untie*	*union*
unemployed	*undo*	
unkind	*unload*	
unfair	*unlock*	

They then read through the first column and agreed that 'un' meant 'not' in these words. Next they read through the second column and John could see that here 'un' had a slightly different meaning. He suggested that it meant "undo" or "put it back to the way it was." They read the list over again and this understanding seemed to fit the words. They went on to the next column and here Greg explained that 'un' was not a prefix, something which was fixed on at the front of the word, but a part of the word itself, part of the root.

The remainder of the lesson time that they spent on the prefix 'un' was used to look up 'un' words in the dictionary. Either Greg or John read the word and John decided what meaning 'un' had or if it was part of the root word.

In subsequent sessions they worked on prefixes as they appeared in John's reading. Greg prepared fill-in-the-blank exercises and spelling quizzes in which he supplied the definition and asked John to spell the word (e.g., not clear - unclear). He also made up exercises requiring John to identify the root and the prefix. In John's reading, Greg encouraged him to tackle larger words by taking away beginnings and endings to find the root word and then adding on

SPECIAL FEATURE

Prefixes and Suffixes

COMMON PREFIXES

Prefix	Meaning	Word Examples
anti	against	antiwar
con	together	contest, conform
de	away from, from	demand, deport
dis	not, to undo	disable
ex	out of	export
im	not	impossible
in	not, in	inactive, inform
inter	between	international
mis	wrong	misplace, misspell
multi	more than one	multicoloured
non	not	nonfiction
post	after	postdated
pre	before	preheat, preview
re	again, back	replay, return
sub	under	submarine
super	above	superman, supernatural
trans	across	transCanada
un	not, reversal of	unhappy, untie
under	lower, less	underground, underage

COMMON SUFFIXES

Suffix	Meaning	Word Example
able	can be	dependable, reasonable
ate	to make,	activate, passionate
er	one who does	worker
ess	woman	actress
est	the most	highest
ful	full of	beautiful
hood	state	motherhood,
ion	condition, act	taxation, repression
ish	like	selfish, childish
ism	act of	capitalism, tourism
ist	one who	racist, tourist
less	without	careless
ment	that which, quality	statement, confinement
ness	state of, that which is	kindness
or	one who does	sailor
ure	state, that which	failure, pressure

the word parts again. This approach was helpful to John. He could often sound out the small root word and then use his knowledge about prefixes and endings to arrive at the whole word.

Suffixes

When they worked on suffixes, John explained that suffixes could change the role of a word in a sentence. Work, for example, is an action. I *work* at a grocery store. Worker means a person, someone who works. He is a fast *worker*. When words with suffixes appeared in John's reading and caused him problems, they stopped and analyzed the word parts and examined the change the suffix made to the word. Greg told John that he should use a word or words he knew which had the same endings to figure out the meaning of a suffix in a word he didn't know.

Greg found that in order to explain suffixes and for John to find the root word, it was necessary to teach John the spelling rules involved in adding suffixes to root words. (See Chapter Seven) In this way their work on word parts led to a new area in spelling.

Contractions

One area with which John had difficulty was contractions. When he read them he usually read the original two words rather than the contraction. For example, he would read *I am* for *I'm* or *we will* instead of *we'll*. Greg didn't feel that they should worry about this as the error itself showed that John understood what he was reading. But Greg did go over examples of contractions and explain that they were a shortened or contracted form for two words. John practiced writing contractions from two words and the original words from the contractions. A few of the contractions he also added to his spelling list.

Compound Words

John and Gregg then worked on compound words.Compound words are created by joining two words, e.g., *windshield, sidewalk*. The new word usually retains the meanings of both of the smaller words. John was asked to complete the following exercises with compound words.

1. Match the words below to make compound words.

air	fruit
grape	stand
card	plane
grand	ever
when	shield
wind	board

2. Underline the compound words in these sentences.

a) Everybody is going to see grandfather.
b) He slept on the doorstep in the moonlight.
c) The children made a snowman in the playground.

3. In these riddles the answer is a compound word. Guess the word parts and then write the compound word.

Example:

a) not in + a rule = **outlaw**
b) a pal + a boat = _____
c) a baby's toy + a lizard = _____
d) a brush + a twig = _____

The work they were doing on structural analysis had taken some of the pressure off the phonics work. Because John found it so difficult to blend the sounds together and hear the word if it was a long one, they had formerly been bogged down with phonics. As John became more familiar with prefixes and suffixes

he felt more confident about tackling new words and he was able to use phonics along with structural analysis and context clues. His word recognition skills improved as a result of his ability to combine the various word attack strategies.

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR BUILDING VOCABULARY

While some adults with reading difficulties have made use of means other than reading to develop their vocabulary, for many being excluded from the world of print has meant that their vocabularies have remained limited. Whether you are reading to your student or he is doing the reading, you will want to provide the means for him to understand the word in the text and to assimilate some of the new words into his own vocabulary.

Both context clues and structural analysis are strategies which can be used to reason and draw conclusions about word meaning. In the same way that the context clues can indicate what the word says, they can also be used to figure out what it means, e.g.,

> The **unanticipated** rain forced them to cancel the barbecue on short notice.
>
> The dog was **tethered** to a post.

Knowledge about word parts, such as 'un' and 'ed' in the above examples, will give the student further aids in determining the meaning of new words.

To remember the meaning of a new word may take many exposures to it. Words are best learned in context because the context will help to recall the meaning. Words and definitions in a list are difficult to retain. The reading your student does will provide a natural context for exploring unfamiliar words.

It is best to work with a small number of new vocabulary words at a time. Your student will be more motivated to learn the words if they are ones which he has chosen, so encourage him to select the words. Each word should be written down and used in a sentence. A definition should be written in his own words, as simply copying the dictionary definition does not require thinking about it. It is a good idea for the student to write down a clue word to trigger his memory of word meaning. This clue may not be meaningful to anyone else. For example, if he is learning *domineering* and uses the name of a bossy uncle or co-worker, this may well help him to remember and to use the new word.

Wordcards, fill-in-the-blank exercises and crossword puzzles can be used for more practice. Try to make vocabulary building fun by using a variety of approaches and by keeping practice frequent but short.

Dictionary Usage

As his reading improves, your student will encounter more and more words that are not in his spoken vocabulary. A dictionary should not be seen as a solution to the problem of an unknown word unless he has learned the complex skills necessary to use one successfully. Promoting the use of a dictionary if, for example, he can not yet use alphabetical order easily, is to invite frustration. Even when your student has mastered

Teaching Dictionary Skills

The student needs to know:	Ideas for Teaching
1. alphabetical order to the 3rd, 4th, etc. place;	1.Construct exercises with increasing levels of difficulty. *Place these words in alphabetical order:* *house cab rat.* *dog cut rattle* *chair crib rather*
2. how to locate letters in the dictionary;	2. Provide practice in finding sections of the dictionary and phone book quickly. Divide the dictionary into four parts: -- a-f, g-m, n-s, t-z -- and ask the student to find b's, w's, n's, and so on.
3. how to use guide words;	3. Explain that guide words are the first and last words on the page. Make exercises for practice, e. g., *The guide words on a page of the dictionary are cod / cognac. Which of these words would be on this page?* *coffee cobweb counter* *code cater challenge*
4. how to figure out under what word his word will be listed; e.g., uninhibited is listed under inhibited	4. Explain that the entry word is the root word. Get the student to remove the prefixes and suffixes when looking up a word. *Beside each word write the entry word you would use to look it up in the dictionary.* *regional* _____ *futility* _____ *unscholarly* _____ *re-occurrence* _____
5. how to use the pronunciation key;	5. Explain the "key" given in each dictionary and give practice by using it each time a word is looked up.
6. that he has to choose the appropriate meaning from the various definitions given.	6. Explain that each word has more than one meaning and that the context of the sentence must be used to select the correct meaning. Explain abbreviations such as n., v., adj. Go over this with the student each time.

Note: Students can use the dictionary and find it helpful even if they have not completely mastered numbers 4, 5 and 6.

using the dictionary, it is likely that having him look up every new word will be too tedious and will spoil the enjoyment of reading. You can help if you tell your student the meanings of some words or look the words up for him, explaining each step in order to model dictionary usage.

Having your student copy down dictionary definitions is not as useful as having him write the meanings in his own words and then having him construct sentences using the new words. You might suggest he start a personal dictionary in which he can record words he finds interesting or thinks would be particularly useful.

As your student's vocabulary increases and as he gains skill in attacking words, he will find reading more enjoyable. His improved word attack skills and his enlarged vocabulary will make reading and understanding what he reads easier for him. It will become less of a task and more of a pleasure.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. Your student knows all of the single consonant sounds **except** those for the letters 'h', 'w', 'x', 'l', 'v'. He knows only 'a' and 'i' of the short vowels. He has memorized the words *he, had* and *have* from his language experience stories.

a) Prepare a word list to read aloud to him for practice in distinguishing the sound of /h/ (at the beginning of words) from other sounds.

b) Plan how you will explain the idea of "key words".

c) Write a short list of words which put 'h' together with other letter sounds he knows for further practice.

d) Think of at least one other way to help him learn this letter-sound relationship.

2. Your student does not know the silent 'e' rule although she does know short vowel, one syllable words.

a) How could you use this list to introduce silent 'e' words?

man	mane
pin	pine
hop	hope
cub	cube

b) Plan how you could use these silent 'e' words to build word families for further silent 'e' practice.

3. Choose an article from a newspaper and construct a cloze exercise from it.

4. Your student has encountered the word *multicultural* in an article about Canada. You want to use this opportunity to take up the prefix *multi*. Plan how you will teach *multi* at your next lesson.

5. You have just found out that your student can't use the phone book, although he knows the alphabet. List the steps in teaching him to use the white pages.

HELPING ADULTS LEARN TO WRITE

I want to be able to write whatever I want because it would be nice to know that if I need to I can do it. I want to go on in school.

Grant, literacy student

Writing is a complex activity. To be able to write just one paragraph requires skills in a variety of areas. You must:

- know how to print or write;
- know how to spell (some) words;
- understand the fundamentals of sentence structure;
- have learned how to use basic punctuation;
- be able to organize ideas in print.

In addition there are different rules which apply to particular writing tasks such as writing letters or filling out forms.

Difficulties may arise at any or all points, so it is not surprising that for most students, writing skills lag behind reading skills. Your student will need your encouragement as well as your attention to both the weaknesses and strengths of his writing.

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter will help you to teach a range of writing skills, from the mechanics of handwriting to the basics of composition. When you have completed this chapter you will be able to answer the following questions:

- **How do I teach printing or cursive writing?**
- **How can I develop instructional material to help my student cope with day-to-day writing tasks?**
- **How can I help my student to begin writing sentences?**
- **What do I do to encourage writing of greater length and in a more sophisticated style?**

TECHNIQUES FOR TUTORING BEGINNING AND INTERMEDIATE WRITERS

Handwriting for Beginning Writers

Your student will likely know the printed alphabet, although his printing may need refining. (A sample of the printed alphabet is provided in Chapter 5.) Printing is acceptable in almost all situations so your student may choose not to learn cursive writing. If he is interested in handwriting you can help by:

- providing a sample of the written alphabet in both upper and lower case letters (see next page);
- constructing exercises in which letters can be traced and written in larger and then in smaller sizes;
- making samples of letters by themselves and linked with other letters.

The focus for handwriting should always be on legibility, not on neatness. As an adult, your student will undoubtedly have more pressing concerns than perfect penmanship. You should work on those things which can make his handwriting easier to read and tackle them one at a time. For example, you can work on elements such as staying on the line, spacing between words, uniform letter size or specific letters. Bring in a variety of handwriting samples. These can demonstrate that there are many acceptable ways to write. They can also give your student practice in deciphering handwriting.

Sentences for Beginning Writers

The language experience approach (Chapter 4) is one way of helping a new writer to begin. Although the tutor is doing the actual printing or writing, the student is learning about other aspects of the writing process. Language experience places the emphasis on writing as communication. It also models good approaches to writing by encouraging talking before writing and providing for chances to make changes in the first draft. Language experience also allows for the introduction of the mechanics of writing (e.g., periods, capitals, commas) and the concept of a sentence.

Here are some others ways to bridge the gap between the non-writer and the writer.

In reading:

- point out the difference between a line of print and a sentence.
- point out different types of end punctuation and how these effect meaning (e.g., Set the table? Set the table. Set the table!).
- talk about how a paragraph is organized. Which are main ideas and which are supporting details? Is there a topic sentence and a concluding sentence? Is it organized by sequence of events (e.g., first, then, next, etc.)?
- be on the lookout for interesting words and expressions.
- be critical of reading material. What makes it good? What could be better?

In spelling:

- ask the student to write spelling words in sentences.
- dictate full sentences and talk about the punctuation required.

Writing can also be made easier by giving the student a starting place.

Cursive Alphabet

• Use fill in the blanks.
Jane was _____ happy because _____ had sent her a _____.

• Have your student complete sentences by supplying the subject or predicate.

a) Sometimes I _____.

b.) _____ will never go there again.

• Write a basic sentence and ask your student to:

a) add descriptive words to improve it.
The girl was sad.
The young girl was extremely sad.
The young, hungry girl was extremely sad and anxious.

b) change words to make it more vivid.
The old man walked across the road.
The ancient man hobbled across the road.
The elderly gentleman strode across the congested road.

If your student does not spell well enough to complete these exercises independently, he can dictate the words for you to write down. For a slightly more advanced student, these exercises are good for introducing a thesaurus. A beginner's thesaurus is easier to use than a dictionary and can serve many of the same purposes. Students often enjoy using a thesaurus.

Functional Writing for Beginning Writers

Your student's most pressing need to develop writing skills will arise from daily functions that most people perform without a problem. These functional writing tasks involve:

SPECIAL FEATURE

Because Sentences

Often students have problems recognizing when they have treated a sentence fragment as if it were a complete sentence. Many of these sentence fragments start with because and do not have the independent clause necessary for a complete sentence. You can help your student with this and other types of sentence fragments by constructing sentence frames, e.g.,

Because _____ , _____ .
of this — this happens

_____ _____ .
this happens — because — of this

You can create exercises which require the student to fill in the frame and you can use the frames to show what is missing from his own sentences. For example, if your student wrote the sentence fragment, *because I like working with children,* you could construct these frames:

Because I like working with children, _____
of this — this happens.
_____ because I like working with children.
this happens — of this

- application forms
- telephone messages
- notes to a child's teacher
- grievance reports
- accident reports
- birthday cards
- letters of complaint
- resumes
- grocery lists
- cheques
- friendly letters
- medical forms
- bank deposits
- entry forms for draws, contests

Filling Out Forms

Even skilled readers find it difficult to fill out forms, so it is easy to understand how difficult they are for a beginning reader. Forms are difficult because they have both a specialized vocabulary and a specialized format. Whenever possible, work on the specific forms which your student has to cope with so that you cover the variations in vocabulary and format which he is encountering.

Format

You may need to explain the following.

- Forms require the most essential information at the top, e.g., name (last name first), address and phone number.
- Printing is required, usually in capital letters.
- Signatures are always done in writing and everyone's signature is unique.
- When a form uses blocks, only one letter or one number should go into each block with a space left between words.
- Forms sometimes ask you to tick the appropriate box:

  ❑ M ❑F

  or to circle: Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.
- A form may have areas you are not supposed to write on, e.g., "For Office Use Only"
- Sometimes you are to write above the line, sometimes below it.

Reading the whole form before beginning will make it clearer where you are to write.

Vocabulary

Familiarize your student with the key words and their variations, e.g., birthdate, date of birth, last name, surname. This can be done using wordcards in conjunction with real forms.

Providing Practice

Make a variety of simplified forms.

- You may want to concentrate on one area, for example, the section which asks for the name.
- Help your student fill out a "clean" copy of a generic form or personal data sheet which he can refer to when faced with a form.
- Bring in a variety of forms as examples for further practice.

The Writing Process

When your student gains the confidence and the basic skills necessary to write more independently, you can begin to work on longer projects. It can be very helpful to discuss what the process of writing is all about, as he may have some misconceptions. Usually students think that only poor writers need to revise their work. According to this view, good writers do only one draft and it is their final copy. Frequently students equate writing with spelling, grammar and punctuation. They don't see writing as communication through print. Both beginning writers and more advanced students are often relieved to find a different approach to writing.

Writing used to be thought of as a linear process; one step logically following another and each one a separate stage from the step which came before it. These steps were usually thought to be:

1. choosing a topic
2. writing an outline
3. writing a first copy
4. proof reading
5. writing the final copy

While many of us were taught that we should write according to these discrete, sequential steps, researchers who have analyzed how people actually do write have found that theory and reality have little in common. While those steps are a part of writing and there is structure to the writing it is not a linear process.

There are different tasks involved in the writing process and the various stages are not completely isolated and discrete. Writing is a recursive process involving doubling back, rethinking and rewriting. For example, when you are revising you may realize that you need to include another paragraph so you generate ideas, organize them and write a first draft of the paragraph. Even at the editing stage you might discover that there is a problem which requires that you return to more major revising. Although publishing is the final step in that project, it provides the motivation for the next one.

Brainstorming

The brainstorming stage is important because here ideas are generated free from concerns about correctness or logical organization. This stage comes before an outline or a first draft, but brainstorming is often returned to throughout the writing process, right up to the publishing stage.

Brainstorming is helped by thinking and talking about the subject. Ideas that come up can be jotted down in point form and further discussion can add to the list. It is helpful if the tutor initially records the ideas to remove spelling worries and to allow the student to concentrate on ideas. A tape recorder may also help. You and your student can talk and brainstorm. Later you can copy down the ideas when you replay the tape.

Organizing

Once he has ideas down on paper, the student has material with which to work. He can review the ideas and decide which ones he wants to include, expand upon or omit. It is at this stage that he can group ideas and establish a logical order.

This stage can be made much easier if the ideas are first recorded on flash-cards. The student can then discard, group or add new ideas simply by moving the cards around. This allows him to try various ways of organizing his ideas without having to erase or rewrite.

If there is a word processor available, your student might find organizing, drafting, revising and editing easier. Many students enjoy becoming computer literate while learning other literacy skills and feel more willing to make alterations to their writing when using a computer.

Drafting

The draft is the first point at which the student may need to deal with the mechanics of grammar and spelling, as well as spend time choosing words and phrases that will successfully get his ideas across. Suggest to him that he double space and leave wide margins so that changes and additions can be easily incorporated.

Revising

Revision should be thought of as seeing again, or re-vision. It is helpful to leave some time (e.g., from one session to the next) between the draft writing and the revision so the student can return to it with a fresh perspective. You can help the student to see his work more objectively by typing it, exactly as it was written, and asking him to revise the typed version.

Because your student is an inexperienced writer, he probably will not know what to look for. A list of questions can help, e.g.,

Are the ideas clearly stated?
Are there enough details?
Are the paragraphs in logical order?
Is there a conclusion?

Your questions will vary according to the strengths and weaknesses of the writing. As your student becomes more aware of his personal writing process and more capable of monitoring his own work, he can help to construct the questions. Encourage him to go through the writing a number of times, focusing on one question at a time. Looking for too many things at once can be too difficult. The revision stage should be more than "tinkering" with the draft. Encourage your student to make major changes, such as in organization, if it will improve the end result.

Editing

This is the polishing stage, the one in which punctuation, grammar, spelling and word choice can be emphasized. Do not try to teach everything, every time. Insisting on perfection can be frustrating and discouraging for the student. It is better to concentrate on one or two areas until these are mastered and then move on to others. Also, do not equate spelling with writing. While some words from his writing may go on to his spelling list, most should simply be corrected and left for some future time.

Publishing

This is the final draft and it should be completed in a way which denotes its value and the hard work it represents.

There are a number of ways to "publish" your student's writing. You can type the student's writing when the final copy has been done. The typed work can be kept in a special binder and, when the collection is large enough, bound in heavyweight coloured paper with staples down one side. Adding coloured tape over the spine can complete the binding. Everyone's writing looks much more impressive when it is typed and students are usually delighted to see their work in this form.

Another means of publishing is to send a letter to the editor of a newspaper, whether it is a large daily paper, a local weekly or a monthly one designed for adults who are learning to read. Another possibility is your tutor association's newsletter. The editor will undoubtedly welcome student writing. You might also collaborate with other tutors and students to collect writing. Your community college, school board or community organization may be able to help you to produce a small booklet.

TECHNIQUES FOR TUTORING MORE ADVANCED WRITERS

Your student may be reasonably comfortable with most of his day-to-day, functional writing tasks and may be concerned with writing letters or short compositions. Some students express their interest in writing by saying that they

want to feel confortable with whatever writing comes up. They may need to write at work, or at home, or they may be planning on continuing at school. You will want to provide them with the advice, suggestions and practice necessary to improve their writing.

Writing with Others in Mind

As students start to do more advanced writing, they often have difficulty recognizing how much they need to include in their writing for the reader to understand what they are saying. They usually write without thinking about who their audience is. They do not always realize that the reader does not have the same context of experiences and perceptions as the writer. In fact, the reader has a different set of experiences and the writer must compensate for this by the clarity of his writing.

To help the student become aware of differences in thinking, you can use these and similar exercises:

1. Ask the student to bring in a magazine picture and have him describe it in detail without showing it to you. (Do not ask questions, just as the reader is unable to ask the writer). When the student feels that the picture has been completely described, he should show it to you. You can then explain the differences between what you imagined on the basis of the description and the actual picture. Take turns doing this exercise.

2. Cut out two matching sets of a variety of shapes and colours. Give one set to your student and keep one. Erect a barrier between yourselves to hide the shapes. Have the student give you directions on where to place each coloured shape on a blank piece of paper. When all the shapes have been laid, lift the barrier and compare the patterns. You can take turns giving directions.

3. Have the student write on the same topic but directing the writing at different audiences. For example, a note to the teacher about his child's illness and a letter to a friend or relative about the same topic, or instructions on replacing spark plugs written for a mechanically-oriented person and then for someone who has little idea about what's under the hood.

Sentence Development

Your student may have difficulty getting beyond simple sentences (one subject and one predicate). Drawing attention to sentence structure in the student's reading material can help to make him more aware of the possibilities. Sentence combining exercises can encourage him to experiment with his own writing.

1. Construct simple sentences which centre on the same idea, e.g.,

   It was a cold day.
   It was a bone-chilling day.
   It was a November day.

2. Explain that the purpose of this exercise is for him to gain experience writing different types of sentences. The task is for him to combine all the sentences into one sentence. There is no "correct" answer, e.g.,

   It was a bone-chilling cold, snowy, November day.
   The November day was snowy and bone-chillingly cold.
   The cold, snowy, November day was bone-chilling.

Once the student understands the idea of sentence combining, examples can be taken from his own writing. After combining the sentences they can be returned to improve the effectiveness of the composition.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

TWENTY-ONE IDEAS FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a letter to Dear Abby about something that concerns you.
2. What is your idea of happiness?
3. What is the most important quality a friend should have? Why does this quality mean so much to you?
4. What is your favourite TV program? Why do you like it?
5. If you had five wishes that would all come true, what would they be?
6. Use a tape recorder to interview someone and write down your interview.
7. What is your aim in life? How are you planning to achieve it?
8. Describe an unusual person you have met. What did you think about him/her?
9. What is a good example of courage in life?
10. Describe a person in your life whom you respect and say why you feel that way about him or her.
11. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter and write an article about an event. (This task is easier if you use an event you know about).
12. What kind of person do you dislike?
13. If you were a parent, how would you give your child self-confidence? Make a list of specific things you would or would not do.
14. Think of a situation that makes you very nervous. What would you do to be less nervous?
15. What would you do if you won a lottery?
16. Can you remember your dreams? See if you can write one down.
17. Describe a favour that someone did for you. Why did she or he do it? How did you feel? What did you do?
18. What does the word freedom mean to you?
19. What is your favorite sport? Explain exactly what it is you like about it.
20. Who is the oldest person you know? What can you learn from this person?
21. Write a story about someone or something that has made an important difference in your life. (This difference may be positive or negative.)

Adapted from material prepared by Ted James, Instructor, Douglas College, New Westminster, B.C.

Research on Writing

For several decades research on writing has been challenging the traditional way in which writing has been taught. While many people have spent many hours learning to analyze the grammar of sentences, research now suggests that this has little or no impact on improving writing skills.

Research is not always consistent, but the following extracts from complex and detailed studies represent new ideas about writing.

- The study of grammar alone is an ineffective way to teach writing and takes time away from actual reading and writing. (*Petrosky, 1977*).

- Frequency of writing in and of itself is not associated with improvement of writing. (*Haynes, 1978*).

- There is a positive relationship between good writing and increased reading experiences. (*Blount, 1973*).

- Beneficial results accrue from the use of such pre-writing procedures as thinking, talking, working in groups, role playing, interviews, debating and problem solving. (*Haynes, 1978*).

- There is some evidence that sentence-combining practice, without instruction in formal grammar, is an aid to syntactic fluency. (*Haynes, 1978*).

- While there seems to be no evidence to support one revision process over another, there is substantial evidence that the revision process itself is critical in improving writing. (*Bamber, 1978*).

- Written language is closely related to oral language. Teaching should emphasize and exploit the close connection between written and oral language. (*Lundsteen, 1976*).

ABE Literacy Curriculum Resource Guide. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, 1987, p. 257.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. Your student is just beginning to read and is new to writing. So far you have not been able to convince her to write anything. At your fourth session, she tells you that she must write a note to her child's teacher. Plan a lesson to help her write the note. Include explanations about the heading, salutation and closing.

2. You are working with a more advanced student. At one session, she brings you the following from a home assignment. Draw up a list of questions to help her edit her paragraph.

> *If I were wealthy my life would change a lot. The first thing I would do would be go on a trip around the world. I would enjoy seeing other countries. And how people live. I would like to have a house with a big garden and a sun deck and a swimming pool and with a two car garage with a rolls royce. My cloths would be beatiful. I'd throw out the ones I have now. I would spend more time with my kids because I would not have to work. My kids could have nice cloths and toys and really good food. I would have a maid and never do housework again.*

3. How were you taught to go about writing? How would you describe your own writing process?

HELPING ADULTS LEARN TO SPELL

From far away I cud see the lighting and thunder. The lighting looked so nice from far away. but it was getting closser to me. It started to rane. It was a shower. I starred hitch hikeing agane becuss it was ranning.

Mike, Literacy Student

With few exceptions, adult literacy students read at a level which is much more advanced than their spelling. When reading, it is necessary to make some decisions about letter-sound relationships. For example, is the 'e' in *bead* the same /e/ as in *feed* or as in *bed*? Memorization of words is also required. But with both phonic and memory strategies, the context of the sentence or paragraph provides substantial assistance in reaching the right decision. When spelling, on the other hand, all decisions are made in the absence of any clues. Is it *sope* or *soap*? *cream or creme? bcuz* or ...?

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter will help you to answer the following questions:

- **How can I help my student remember the correct spelling?**
- **How do I set up a spelling program?**
- **What are the basic spelling rules?**

TUTORING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPELLING

Your student may be eager to improve his spelling and yet find spelling embarrassing and frustrating. Because of this anxiety you may decide to leave spelling aside for a few sessions until you and your student have established a rapport which allows him to feel more comfortable about making mistakes.

Often spelling difficulties are the result of poor learning skills. If a student does not know how to tackle a word, asking him to "learn these words" is not going to help. You must first equip him with the skills for learning. To begin with, find out how your student presently attempts to learn spelling (See Chapter 9). From there you can teach the new or additional skills at every session, using demonstrations and exercises, until they become a habit for the student. The skills should be explicit so that your student can evaluate them and decide which ones work best for him.

Steps to Better Spelling

1. Analyze the word: The student should look at a word that is correctly spelled. He should ask himself: What is the difficult part of the word? What is unusual about it? How can I help myself remember?

2. Practice: He should practice, by repeating many times and trying to use all the senses he can by spelling aloud, writing the word, looking at it and visualizing it in his "mind's eye".

3. Review: The student should continue to study the word until he has spelled it correctly on three separate, consecutive occasions. Continuing to study a word after the first time it has been spelled correctly significantly increases long-term retention. You can give your student a "Spelling Worksheet" to help him follow these steps.

SPELLING WORKSHEET

Copy	Memory Help	Spell Aloud	Spell Aloud And Write	"Quiz" Yourself	Check
1. eye	eye	✓	eye eye eye eye	eye	✓
2. rain	rain again	✓	rain rain rain rain	rain	✓
3. eight	eight is right	✓	eight eight eight eight	eight	✓
4. was	was	✓	was, was was, was	was	✓

SPECIAL FEATURE:

Steps for Correcting Spelling Errors

1. Look at how you spelled the word and see where you made your mistake. What type of a mistake was it?
2. Copy the word on a sheet of paper and check to make sure you have spelled it correctly.
3. Think of a "memory trick" to help you remember the right way to spell at the spot you misspelled it last time. Write this memory trick down.
4. Read the word and spell it aloud three or more times.
5. When you feel that you know it, close your eyes and "see" the word. Look again to check that what you have seen in your mind's eye was correct.
6. Print the word and then trace it with your finger. Try tracing it on paper, in the air, or on your arm.
7. Write each letter of the word, saying the name of the letter as you write it. In this way you are using your eyes, your ears, your hand and your voice. Do this three or more times.
8. Cover the word and write it from memory. Check it.
9. If you spelled the word correctly at step 8, repeat step 8 again three or more times. If you misspelled it, begin at step 3 again.
10. Review your spelling words often.

Learning to Spell: A Case Study

At their third tutorial session, Mike and his tutor, Frank, talked about Mike's difficulties with spelling. Frank asked him how he went about learning to spell a word. At first Mike wasn't quite sure what Frank meant, but with a bit more discussion he said that he looked at the word and sometimes he wrote it. Frank suggested that if Mike had some new ways to learn words it might be easier for him to remember them. Mike was interested, but not convinced. Frank further suggested that they hold off on spelling for a few weeks until he had a chance to see more of Mike's writing and could pinpoint problem areas. Relieved, Mike agreed.

For the next two weeks Frank kept a record of the types of errors that Mike made in spelling. He thought that Mike made errors in four major categories.

Category 1 - **Sight Words**

Word	Mike's Version
eye	i, ey
was	wos, wus
of	uf
have	hav
one	won
because	becuss
before	befour
people	pepul
they	thay

Category 2 - **Phonic Words**

Word	Mike's version
made	mad
boil	bole
rain	rane
hope	hop
read	red
able	abul
again	agane

Category 3 - **Special Word Families**

Word	Mike's version
mind	mine
sight	site
rough	ruff

Category 4 - **Suffixes**

Word	Mike's version
boxes	boxs
really	realy
tries	trys

At the next session, Frank brought the list and explained to Mike the four categories of misspelled words.

Sight Words - Words which are commonly used, but which often do not follow regular phonic patterns, e.g., *eye, of.*

Phonic Words - Words which follow general rules about letters and sounds.

Special Word Families - Small groups of words which have a similar, but uncommon pattern, e.g., *rough, tough, enough.*

Suffixes - Words which follow rules about adding endings.

Frank and Mike agreed that the errors Mike made suggested that he knew some of the rules, but he had difficulty knowing when they applied and when they didn't. He also had difficulty remembering words which required memorization. For instance, he knew that *was* wasn't spelled *wuz* which was how it sounded, but he couldn't recall which vowel was the correct one.

They spent some time talking about whether they should concentrate on one category of words before going on to another or do words from every category. Eventually they decided that they would select words from Mike's writing, regardless of the category. Mike would learn spelling rules, phonic patterns and word families as they came up.

Together they brainstormed for ideas on things that Mike could do to help learn his spelling words. Frank wrote them down for Mike.

Spelling Helps

1. Write the word.
2. Say the word.
3. Spell the word while looking at it.
4. Picture it in my mind.
5. Pin the word on the mirror at home and spell it every time I see it.
6. Test myself by covering it up and then mark it.
7. Figure out where the mistake is and think of a way to remember it.
8. Print the word on a card and trace it with my finger.

Mike began his spelling list with five words. In the next sessions, and between sessions, he practiced his spelling using the techniques he and Frank had listed. Although they seemed to take a long time while he was doing them, Mike was encouraged by the fact that he was spelling the five words correctly. Frank had made up a worksheet based on the "Spelling Helps" list and Mike found that this made it easier to do the steps.

As the sessions progressed, they kept track of Mike's spelling words and every time a word was spelled correctly three times in a row they moved it to a list they called the review list.

Because his review quizzes were showing that he remembered the words, and as the strategies for learning words were becoming a habit, they decided that Mike should try learning 10 words at a time. By recording when he spelled it correctly and when he made an error, new words could be added as soon as some were moved to the review list. In this way the list of words he was learning was always maintained at 10 words.

Sometimes the spelling words came directly from Mike's writing and sometimes one or two words led to tackling a whole group of words. For instance, when Mike misspelled *lead (leed)* and *each (ech)*, they spent the spelling portion of their session creating a list of 'ea' /e/ words and from these Mike chose several to learn to spell. Another time they decided to work on the "change the 'y' to 'i' rule" and this spread over three sessions.

Throughout their sessions Frank emphasized Mike's successes and strengths. When he spelled a word correctly, Frank encouraged Mike to talk about the strategies he had used by asking him how he knew how to spell it. Despite the fact that spelling was a relatively short time in each session (approximately 15 or 20 minutes), Mike was able to see improvement in his spelling. This was because he worked on it at home using the Spelling Worksheet and he reviewed his words frequently. It was also because Mike had developed strategies for learning to spell and so could more efficiently learn and recall the correct spelling. He was now a better learner.

Spelling Guidelines

1. Short Vowel Words

a. Buzz off Miss Pill
When a word with one short vowel ends with 'z', 'f'. 's', or 'l', the final consonant is doubled.
(common exceptions: *bus, gas, yes, if, us, this)*

b. CK
In words where the /k/ sound follows a short vowel, it is spelled 'ck'
Examples: *clock, tack* but *cloak, take*

c.TCH
The /ch/ sound immediately after a short vowel is spelled 'tch'
Examples: *patch, kitchen, butch*
(common exceptions: *much, such, rich, which)*

d.The Doubling Rules
i)In **one**-syllable words which end with **one** consonant and which have **one** short vowel, double the final consonant when adding a suffix which starts with a vowel. This is sometimes called the l:l:l rule.
Examples: *hop - hopping, tin - tinned*
(common exceptions: never double 'x', e.g., boxing)

e. The doubling rule also applies to words with more than one syllable **if** the stress is on the final syllable.
Examples: *admit - admitting* but
enter - entered

2. Silent 'e' Rule

When a word ends with a silent 'e', drop the 'e' when adding a suffix which begins with a vowel.
Examples: *shade - shady take - taking.*
(common exceptions: the 'e' is kept when it is needed to make a 'g' soft, e.g., *courage - courageous)*

3. Plurals

a. Most plurals are made by adding 's' (common exceptions: *geese, mice)*

b. When a word ends in 's', 'x', 'z', 'ch' or 'sh', add 'es' to make the plural form
Examples: *bosses, foxes, buzzes, patches, rashes*

c. Some words which end in 'f' or 'fe' are pluralized by changing the 'f' or 'fe' to 'ves'
Examples: *leaf - leaves knife - knives*

4. Adding Suffixes to Words Ending in 'y'

When a word ends with a consonant followed by a 'y', change the 'y' to 'i' before adding the suffix
Examples: *try - tries, happy - happiness* but *toy - toys, pray -prayer*

Sometimes what appear to be irregularities in English spelling can be explained by looking at related words. For example, the silent letters in *bomb, sign* and *real* can be better understood and remembered if they are seen alongside *bombard, signal* (or *signature*) and *reality*. The spelling of words such as *social, physician* and *musician* can be more readily remembered if their roots are recalled - *society, physic* and *music*. Whenever possible, encourage your student to use related words to help with spelling.

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. In recent sessions your student has misspelled *train (trane)* and *again (agane)* in his written work. Plan how you might approach working on these words with him.

2. Use the Spelling Worksheet and follow the "Steps for Learning Spelling Words" for at least three words which **you** have difficulty spelling correctly. Which steps work best for you? Are there changes you would make in the steps?

8

SETTING GOALS, ASSESSING PROGRESS, AND PLANNING LESSONS

I'd been working with my student for about eight months. At first our lessons seemed to go really well. But after awhile she was less keen and started missing sessions. It got pretty frustrating. I put more and more energy into planning the lessons and they kept going flat. It seemed difficult to stick to the lesson plan. Finally, I contacted the tutor centre for advice.

Maria, volunteer literacy tutor

Maria and Jennifer had started off well, with a clear idea about Jennifer's goals. But you can't simply establish goals once and go on from there. Jennifer's personal goals were changing, partly as a result of the tutoring, and the lessons needed to change to be in line with the new interests she was developing. Evaluating goals has to be an ongoing thing. It has to be part of evaluating progress and lessons.

Carol, tutor coordinator

Having your lessons well planned will ensure the best use of the time spent by both you and your student. It will also convey the message that you consider the lessons to be important and will encourage your student to come prepared, too. Your lesson plan must be based on the goals that you and your student have set and a realistic assessment of what you have achieved to date. Involving your student in goal-setting and ongoing assessment shows your commitment to meeting the student's needs.

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter deals with lesson planning and includes several sample lesson plans. After reading this chapter you will be able to answer these questions:

- **Why is setting goals important?**
- **How do my student and I assess our progress?**
- **How can I involve my student in lesson planning?**
- **How do I go about developing a lesson plan?**
- **What do I do if the lesson I've planned doesn't work out?**

SETTING GOALS WITH YOUR STUDENT

At some point during your first sessions with your student, you should talk about her goals regarding reading and writing. While goals are often classified as long-term or short-term, the subject is more complex. For example, your student might simultaneously hold the long-term, immediate and in-between goals shown in the box below.

Of course these goals are not isolated from each other. The skills necessary to achieve mid-range goals contribute towards reaching the long-term objective and mid-range goals are important in their own right. They give the student a chance to experience successful learning and to see literacy skills make positive changes in her life. The goal of being a proficient reader, and even of being able to help her children do their schoolwork, may be a long way off, but obtaining a driver's licence can make a big difference to her self-esteem and to her daily life. The words she learns in order to read signs will be encountered in other types of reading as well.

Your student may know her long-term objectives but she may need your assistance in establishing mid-range goals. It is difficult for someone who doesn't know much about the process of reading and writing to assess what will take a long time and what is achievable more immediately. Your knowledge of what skills are necessary to handle a task such as getting a driver's licence, learning banking or improving spelling, will help you to recommend tasks which can best be tackled first.

If the student has difficulty thinking of middle range goals, ask her how her inability to read causes problems on a day-to-day basis. Ask her how she handles shopping, banking, letter writing and reading the TV guide. "Walk" through the week with her to help identify areas which are suitable for study in the tutorial sessions and which she would like to learn to do in a new, literate fashion.

In addition to helping her identify mid-range goals, your expertise as a reader and a tutor is essential for establishing immediate goals. You have the knowledge necessary to analyze a learning objective or task, to see what its components are and to choose where to begin. This may sound difficult, but you

Long Term Goals	Mid-range Goals		Immediate Goals
to be able to read anything	to be able to help my kids with homework	to improve my spelling	to learn road signs
	to be more independent	to get my driver's license	to finish this story
			to learn these 10 spelling words

will find that experience will improve your skills and give you more insight into task analysis. At first it is helpful to write out your analysis. It might look like this:

Goal: to learn first-aid

Present Knowledge:
- some "common sense" familiarity with household first-aid
- can do some independent reading

Needs to:
- learn to read specific words related to first aid
- learn first aid principles and techniques
- learn how to read diagrams
- learn previewing and summarizing to help retention

To draw up a lesson plan you will need to be more detailed and perhaps further analyze each point in the task analysis. During this process you should prepare for the lesson by thinking about exactly what you are going to teach and what explanations, materials and activities you are going to use. Thinking ahead will make you feel more comfortable about your sessions and your tutoring abilities.For example, after previewing the first chapter of the first-aid book, you might decide to:

- teach the following new words: fracture, ambulance, emergency, immediately
- use wordcards
- teach 'ture' ending as a word pattern
- break the difficult words into syllables

ASSESSING PROGRESS

Planning for the next lesson always starts with an assessment of the last lesson. In practice, assessment is ongoing throughout a lesson, but it is usually consolidated at the end of the session when you and your student discuss the successes and problems which have occurred. This discussion will help you to have a clear direction for planning your next lesson.

Though the whole of Chapter 9 is devoted to assessment, the topic is so important to lesson planning that certain points need to be considered here.

The assessment of a session should always be done from the vantage point of the student's goals. Adopting this perspective will help you to concentrate on the student's needs and avoid pursuing unnecessary levels of perfection. For example, if a student has writing letters to her parents as a goal, working on the format of a friendly letter would be important and the difficulties she has with commas would be put aside, at least temporarily.

The assessment process should involve both the tutor and the student. At the beginning, the student will probably have difficulty discussing your teaching and her learning. After all, this is not the approach she has learned to expect from teachers. But after a time, if you demonstrate a willingness to listen and to act upon her suggestions, the student will offer more comments and ideas about the tutorial sessions.

The value of joint assessment is that:

- your relationship is maintained on an equal footing;
- your work together is likely to be more relevant and interesting to the student;
- it encourages the student to be aware of how she learns best and to be respon-

sible for seeing that the lessons take her learning style into account;
- it provides you with information about your teaching that you would otherwise only be able to infer.

The following is a list of questions which can be discussed with your student. Encourage her to select from or add to this list to help her evaluate the lesson and her progress.

Student Assessment of the Lesson

- Which part of the lesson did I enjoy most?
- What was easiest? Why was it easy?
- What was the most difficult? Why? What could I, or the tutor, do to make it easier?
- What new learning did I do today?
- Was there enough variety in the lesson to keep my interest?
- Have my goals changed?
- How does what we did contribute to reaching my goal?
- Did I understand the purpose of the activities?
- What needs more work? Can I work on this at home?

The next list of questions is to help you, the tutor, assess the lesson. You may want to share these questions with your student and ask for her views as well as offering your own.

Tutor Assessment of the Lesson

- Did I explain the purpose behind activities?
- Did I correctly assess what my student knew and begin at the right place?
- Did I break instruction into manageable steps?
- Was our initial review successful and thorough enough?
- Did I listen well and include the student's ideas, interests and concerns?
- Were my explanations clear?
- Was I encouraging, pointing out strengths and progress?
- Did I provide enough practice for an understanding of new ideas and/or skills?
- What method seemed to work the best?
- What was the most successful part of the lesson? Why was it successful?
- What was the least successful thing we did? How could it be changed?
- Did the student master the objectives of the lesson?
- Was I flexible enough to recognize when we needed to move away from the lesson plan?

Your student will be more encouraged to share her views if they are solicited throughout the lesson, not only at the end. For example, you might ask which topic or subject she wants to do first in the session. Instead of bringing in one book or article you might bring in several and ask her to select one for your next session. It is most important to follow up on the student's interests and opinions if you want to demonstrate that you value her input.

Both you and your student will find it easier to assess her progress if you keep adequate records. Your lesson plans and her work can be your record system providing that they are well-organized. Learning frequently seems to occur in leaps which are followed by plateaus. During the plateaus it is easy for both of you to get discouraged. Looking back over what has been learned can help to put these periods into perspective and keep up the motivation necessary to persevere.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

About Praise

It is well known that praise can motivate people to further effort, but did you know that how you give praise makes a difference?

Praise is most effective when it focuses on the achievement and the task by giving information. "You're doing a fine job. Every sentence has a capital at the beginning" may help keep the student motivated by making him or her feel competent. "That's the way I like things done" may undermine the student by focusing on you, the tutor, as the judge.

Praise should specify the accomplishment. General statements are less believable and less helpful in telling the student where the strength of his or her performance lies. Try to point out exactly what was good about the work.

Too many no's can be discouraging. Look for the positive in any situation to offer encouragement, as in these examples:

- "You're right that the first sound is /m/. Let's take a look at the second sound again."
- "You've got all the correct letters. All you need to do now is to make sure they are in the right order."
- "You're remembering to use sounding out to figure out what the word says. Maybe using context clues will also help you to get the word."

PLANNING THE LESSON

The Components of a Lesson Plan

The assessment you and the student have done on the last session, along with your task analysis, will provide the basis for your lesson plan. While lesson outlines vary in appearance, you will want to include these components:

1. review
2. description of goals
3. activities for new learning
4. materials required
5. lesson evaluation
6. home assignments

1. Review

Because forgetting is inevitable for all learners, review is essential. Design your review to begin easily as a "warm-up" to the lesson. This part of the review should be used to go over material that the student knows well. In this way the

lesson can begin on a positive, confidence-building note. You can then move on to review part or all of what was covered at the most recent lesson.

2. Goals for the Lesson

Try to be as concrete as possible when describing goals so that you will know if they have been achieved. "Will read 10 wordcards with 'l' blends correctly" is more useful than "Will learn 'l' blends" as it provides you with a criterion for judging progress.

3. Activities for New Learning

Here, as in the review part of your lesson, you will want to use a variety of approaches. If a student is faced with the same wordcards at several sessions, she may begin to feel defeated. Putting the words in a puzzle, in a list with other words, in a game or in a reading assignment can make all the difference. Variety also provides a change of pace within the lesson and helps the student to be attentive.

4. Materials Required

Nothing is more frustrating than to arrive for a lesson and discover you've left an essential piece of material at home. This section can be your checklist.

5. Lesson Evaluation

You may want to make short notes throughout the lesson and then add to them after the lesson. You may choose to fill out the evaluation with your student or even to have the student complete this section. In addition to helping you decide the direction for your next lesson(s), evaluation at the end of a lesson provides a summary of the session and hence a final review before the lesson is over.

6. Home Assignments

The student should understand that progress depends on her doing work at home. This may only mean 15 minutes a day spent reading or studying spelling, but it will still minimize forgetting and allow each session to build on the last one and not simply repeat it.

The more specific the home assignments are, the more likely they are to get done. For instance, filling out a spelling worksheet in preparation for a spelling quiz is more concrete that asking the student just to study the words.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

Overlearning

As mentioned earlier, forgetting is an inevitable part of learning. Review, and the student's home assignments, will help to combat forgetting, but overlearning is also essential. Overlearning refers to continuing to learn something even when it seems to have been mastered. Overlearning is done automatically by people who have good learning skills. You do it every time you think something along the lines of "I think I've got that down now. I'll just go through it three or four more times to make certain." Your student is most likely unaware of this technique and the role it plays in reducing what is forgotten.

Explain overlearning and incorporate it into your lessons by planning reviews, by overteaching, and by not assuming that something is mastered the first time it is done successfully.

Adapting the Lesson

Responding to your student's needs and interests naturally entails being flexible. You may find, for example, that the review portion of your lesson indicates that the student is not ready to go on to the new material you have planned, but needs more instruction on what you thought was mastered last week. If this is the case there is no point in going ahead; you need to switch tracks.

Switching tracks mid-lesson gets very much easier with experience. If you do not yet have that experience, two things can help you out:

a) **overpreparing** - have ready more materials and activities than you think will be necessary for all parts of your lesson, including the review. This will be useful when you must offer more review or examples than you thought would be necessary. It will also be useful when the student learns more quickly than you anticipated and therefore your lesson will go further than you expected.

b) **being honest** - you can simply admit that you made a mistake in underestimating the amount of review that would be necessary. You can bring more review work to the next session and in the meantime you can go on to something else you have planned. This approach gives you time to re-evaluate and to prepare.

If the student seems to have more trouble with a topic or task than she did last week, you might find out that there was a difficulty with last week's lesson which neither of you recognized. You might also find that this is a good time to remind your student about the value of studying at home between sessions.

Sometimes you will find that despite your best efforts and the student's best efforts, she is not grasping something. At this point you should consult with your tutoring centre for advice on what to do. Possibly a new approach will help or you may want to leave that area for a while and return to it at a later date. It may even be an area that the student will have to work around and develop compensating strategies to cope. In each case, flexibility is required on your part, whether it is a matter of being receptive to new ideas or being prepared to adjust short-term goals.

Effective tutoring may seem to involve contradictory approaches. On the one hand, you should prepare carefully and have a detailed analysis of the lesson. On the other hand, you must be prepared to abandon your lesson plan and follow the direction the student's needs may suddenly point out. But even when you appear to be abandoning the lesson plan, you will find that the process of planning has made you more aware of the complexities of each task and has refined your understanding of the teaching/learning process. And what is put aside in one lesson is frequently picked up again at another. In the meantime you will have done your best to address the student's concerns and needs and this will have a positive impact on your relationship and her progress.

Some Sample Lesson Plans

Your lesson plans can be set down in one of many formats. Two formats that tutors have found useful are shown on the following pages. Try using one format, then the other. Or, you may prefer to design your own format. The format you use is not really important. What is important is that you and your student have clear plans for each lesson!

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN FORMAT #1

	Materials	Days of the week cards, language experience story, wordcards, sentence card strips.
5 min.	Warm-up	Read days of the week cards to Mary and have her repeat. Ask her to sequence cards.
10 min.	Review	Read last week's story in unison. Match 5 word cards to words in story. Show cards separately and ask her to read them.
	Lesson: Part 1	
	Goals: a) - sequence sentence strips correctly b) - add words to word family list; read and spell them correctly c) - dictate 4 sentences and identify punctuation needed	
10 min.	Activities: a) - read story together again and then have Mary read it independently -ask her to put sentence cards into sequence -read story again	
10 min.	b) - together make word family list for 'at' -read together several times and then ask Mary to read it independently -dictate the word family to her	
10 min.	c) - ask Mary to choose 4 words and dictate a sentence for each one - ask her to put in capitals and end punctuation	
15 min.	Break	
	Lesson: Part 2	
	Goals	a) - summarize and predict outcome of story
20 min.	Activities:	a) -read mystery novel aloud to Mary -ask her to summarize and predict at various points (ask her to mention vocabulary she doesn't know so we can discuss the new words)
10 min	Close	-assess today's lesson -ask Mary to think of a topic for a new language experience story

SAMPLE LESSONPLAN FORMAT # 2

Goals	Activities	Mike's Comments and Suggestions for Next Session
WARM-UP -Mike will correctly identify vowels in the alphabet. -He will create word family for short vowel words.	-Ask Mike to point out vowels on alphabet sheet. -Ask him to create word families for 'op' and 'ap'. *10 min.*	Good
REVIEW -Mike will correctly spell words from spelling review list.	-Dictate spelling list from our fifth session. *5 min.*	5/5
-Mike will read story he wrote last week.	-Ask Mike to read the story he completed last week. *10 min.*	Good I will work on education and future
WRITING -Mike will brainstorm in preparation for writing.	-Discuss topic Mike chose (Handicapped Assoc.). -Take notes for him. -Read and ask questions to expand. *30 min.*	Good Mike had a lot of ideas. Next time we will organize them
READING -Mike will demonstrate understanding of magazine article by correctly answering three inferential questions	-Preview story with Mike. -Go over difficult words. -Have Mike read silently. -Ask comprehension questions (orally). *30 min.* -Ask Mike to study his spelling words aloud using strategies. *15 min.* -Make a word tree. *5 min*	Good Mike did well on previewing. Some of the vocabulary caused comprehension problems. ok. I will work on this for next time Good

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. In your last lesson your student, a reader at the very beginning stages, had difficulty with these words from her language experience story: *car, been, drive, move.* You made wordcards during the lesson and read them over with the student, but she still had difficulty. Plan what you will do to go over them at the next session.

2. Your student, who reads quite well but who writes and spells poorly, wants to write a letter of complaint to a local department store. You have already worked on friendly letters and the student knows their format very well. Plan how you will begin work on this business letter.

3. Your student is interested in learning about small aquariums so that he can start keeping fish. He has picked up a book on aquariums but finds much of it too difficult. Draw up a list of resources and activities you might use with this topic.

MEASURING THE RESULTS OF TUTORING

I see two ways to evaluate what we're doing. One is to make time in each session for talking about what we just did and what we're going to do next. This gets written down as part of the lesson evaluation. The other thing we do is to stop every once in a while and do a review, a more major looking back. The two things together seem to keep us going in the right direction.

Lucy, volunteer literacy tutor

You may belong to a tutoring program which has provided you with an initial assessment or you may have begun tutoring by helping a friend with a reading or writing task. Whichever the case, it is essential for you and your student to assess the work you do together. Assessment should be done from session to session and on a periodic basis.

EXPECTATIONS

This chapter is designed to help *you* and *your student* answer these questions:

- **Have we been making progress?**
- **What skill areas need more work?**
- **Where do we go from here?**

THE IMPORTANCE OF ON-GOING ASSESSMENT

On-going assessment is necessary:

- to identify areas which need work so that you can successfully plan on a lesson-to-lesson basis;
- to provide periodic checks to see that you are on the right track;
- to give the motivation which comes from seeing progress;
- to let you know when you should be contacting a tutor centre or other support source for assistance.

On-going assessment can also be a tool for teaching or reinforcing a strategy; all assessments can promote discussion and further learning about the learning process itself.

In your evaluations you should seek to answer these three questions: What has been learned? What needs to be learned? How can it best be learned? You should talk about these questions with your student to make it clear that "passing" or "failing" is not at issue. The discussions the two of you have during each session regarding the progress of the lesson should establish that student achievements are not the only factors involved in evaluation. Your instruction and the materials and topics being used are always open for evaluation, too.

MEASURING PROGRESS IN READING

To assess the student's reading progress you can use material which the student is currently working on or material which you have selected on the basis of your student's instructional level. Remember, knowing a subject helps reading, so choose a topic which is familiar to your student.

Assessing the reading process is difficult because most of the process is not vocalized, even during oral reading. Nonetheless, you can gain some understanding of the student's reading process by careful observation. While you are observing, try to answer the following questions.

Does she read to understand the meaning? If she does, then she will correct a mistake in word recognition which does not "fit" the meaning. If she is not reading for meaning, mistakes which make the sentence or paragraph sound confused or meaningless will not necessarily be recognized.

Does she know when she has had problems with vocabulary? Does she find out what a new word means by asking, using context or using a dictionary? When you ask her if any words were difficult, does she answer accurately? (You can check whether or not she has understood the vocabulary by asking her to explain the meanings of words which you think she may not know.)

Does the student know when she has had problems with ideas? When you ask if she understood the article, does she correctly judge her comprehension? (This can be verified by asking "Can you tell me about what you have just read?" or by asking specific questions.)

Assessing Comprehension

There are two fairly simple ways in which reading comprehension can be assessed informally as part of any or every tutorial session.

Summaries

After your student has silently read a paragraph, an article or story, ask her to tell you about it. You can explain that she does not need to tell you everything, but just tell generally about the important ideas, people and/or events. Her summary should include the main ideas from the material.

If the summary indicates that she understood and was able to remember the main points, then you are reasonably safe in assuming that she is able to comprehend material of that kind written at that level. If the summary indicates problems in comprehension you should: a) check to see if the difficulties were caused by problems in word recognition (see the section on word attack assessment); b) follow the summary with questions.

Questions

For some students it is more appropriate to ask specific questions than to ask them to summarize. This is because summarizing requires more advanced speaking skills and it also requires more selecting and organizing of information than does answering questions. It is likely that even if your student does do a summary you will want to follow it up with questions. These questions do not need to be formal. They may be the beginning of a discussion which you and the student have about the content of the passage.

Your questions should include:

- identifying the main idea;
- understanding sequence (if this type of question is suitable to the passage);
- recognizing key details;
- predicting outcomes;
- drawing conclusions; and
- evaluating content.

You can make up your questions before the lesson and simply skip over ones which already have been answered by the summary. Asking a range of question types will help you to see where difficulties lie and hence what subskills of reading should be addressed. It is important to realize, however, that one reading passage and set of questions are insufficient for an evaluation. The reading which your student does on a regular basis in your tutorial sessions will allow you to establish if there is a pattern to the difficulties.

Assessing Word Attack Skills

Any assessment of word attack skills, apart from alphabet knowledge, should involve words in context, whether in sentences or, as in the case of signs, as part of a symbol. Isolating the skill or test item will tell you if the student can recognize it easily. Placing it in a context will tell you how well the student knows it when other clues are present. The latter is most valuable because reading in day-to-day activities is done in context.

Assessing Alphabet Knowledge

1) Ask the student to print (or write) the letters of the alphabet in order, first in capital letters and then in lower case letters.

2) Point to letters of the alphabet and ask the student to name them. If she can identify them all, try introducing a variety of scripts. This will tell you if the student can read various type styles.

Assessing Word Attack Strategies

How easily a student learns to recognize words is at least partially dependent on how she approaches the task. You will recall that Chapter 5 showed how context clues, phonics and structural analysis could be used to help decipher words. It is important for you to assess how well your student is using each of these strategies. The following questions will help your student to evaluate the methods she uses to find out what a printed word "says". The questions are designed to be answered through discussion with the student, but most can also be answered through observation.

In discussion with your student, explain that each approach is appropriate sometimes. The goal is not to use every strategy on every word, but to have a repertoire of strategies which can be used flexibly.

ASSESSING MY WORD ATTACK STRATEGIES

a) Every Time **b)** Sometimes **c)** Rarely **d)** Never

1. When I come to a word I don't know:

___I try to sound it out.
___I break it into parts.
___I look for parts of the word that I've seen and know from other words.
___I use the rest of the sentence (paragraph) to help me figure out what it says.
___I use a dictionary.
___I ask someone.
___I skip over it.

2. When I think I've figured out what a word says I check it by:

___repeating it several times to be sure.
___reading the sentence (paragraph) over to see if it makes sense.

3. When I know for certain what the word is:
___I make a decision to remember it.
___I write it down to practice later.
___I think of other words that are similar.
___I picture it in my mind.
___I say it aloud several times

Using Oral Reading for Reading Assessment

If you are interested in assessing only reading comprehension, it is not necessary to ask the student to read aloud. But if you are evaluating word attack skills in the context of paragraph reading, you will need to have the student read orally. In this situation the student should read the paragraph silently before reading it to you. This will help to counteract the nervousness which almost always arises with oral reading. You should have your own copy of the reading material so that you can make notations as she reads. An alternative is to tape her reading. This allows you to go over it carefully afterwards and has the added advantage of enabling your student to hear her own reading. In either case, go over the reading with your student afterwards.

Special Feature:

Reading Signs

Many students have problems reading signs. Material for teaching and learning signs is readily available. Grocery store flyers, newspapers, driving license guides and magazines are good places to look. Simple signs such as *push* and *pull* on doors can be drawn or you might want to consider going on a photographic expedition with your student to take pictures of written signs.

Once you have pictures, they can be cut out, pasted on cards and used for reading practice. Usually the context of the sign itself helps provide a clue for reading it. For example, the red hexagon is a clue that the word is stop. As the student becomes proficient with the signs, the words alone can be written on the other side. This side can be shown first and the flip side used for confirmation. In this way the student learns to read the signs and to recognize the words with fewer clues for other reading contexts.

The sign collection can be added to on a continuing basis. Because many new readers have difficulty finding opportunities to use their limited reading skills outside of tutoring sessions, asking your student to clip out or copy down signs is a good way to encourage reading between sessions.

A variation on signs is bumper stickers. Your student might be interested in copying down the messages on bumper stickers to bring to the tutorial session. Reading bumper stickers can make for an entertaining session!

It is easy to assess improvement in sign reading. The cards can be shown and divided into three piles: mastered, instruction required and review required. The relative size of the piles over the sessions will let you both know that progress is being made.

Using a Marking Key

If you do not use a tape recorder, you will need to have a system for notations. You may choose to use the one here or invent your own.

⌒• Repetition
/ • Omission
^ • Substitution or addition
H• Hesitation
A• Assistance required
[]• Initial error, corrected independently.

Steps in Using Oral Reading for Assessment

To assess how well your student is reading, you should have him:

- read the article silently;
- read it orally;
- summarize it;
- answer questions about it;
- participate in discussing the evaluation.

Assessing Reading: A Case Study

The rather lengthy evaluation illustrated below would be done only on a periodic basis, as it represents too much work to be done each session. Tim, the student, read the article silently, then orally. He summarized it, answered questions, then discussed it with his tutor.

Evaluation of Word Recognition

The tutor made the following notations regarding Tim's word attack skills.

- Tim read the title!
- He still has trouble with numbers. He managed to read 25 and 14, but couldn't read 80 or 101.
- Names and places were a problem. He seemed to get stumped by the length of unfamiliar words. He did try to sound them out.
- His reading was much smoother.
- He didn't make use of the context to help him, e.g. daughter was misread.

Comprehension Questions

The following questions were prepared ahead of time by the tutor. Some questions were not asked as they were mentioned during the student's summary.

How old was Mary Partington when this article was written?

What was her one wish?

Who gave her wish to her?

Where did Mary grow up?

The Partington family moved to B.C. in 1938. Why might they have moved?

Why do you think Mary rode a horse to school when she was younger?

Was Arthur Partington very old when he died?

What kind of a person does the article make you think that Mary is?

Back in the saddle after 80 years. (eight-o)

Mary Partington was ~~101~~ (one-0-one) in July.

She had one wish on her birthday.

She wanted to ride a horse again.

(A) Partington got her wish. Her ~~daughter~~ (dafters (didn't use context)) gave her a special birthday gift. It was a ride on a horse.

(A) Mary Partington like horses. She grew up on a farm in Manitoba. (H)

She rode a horse to school every day.

Partington married at age 25.

(A) Mary and Arthur Partington had two ~~daughters~~. The family moved to B.C. in 1938.

Arthur died ([did]) three years ago.

(A) Mary now lives in a nursing home.

She has 14 great-grandchildren.

How did the ~~101~~ (one-0-one)-year-old like her birthday ride? "It was beautiful. You never forget how to ride a horse," she said.

Mary Partington enjoyed her birthday ride.

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Tim's Summary and Answers
Tim got the gist of the article except that he didn't have a clear idea of how old Mary was. (He couldn't read 101 and wasn't sure what a great-grandchild was).

Although he couldn't tell me how old Mary was, he knew where in the article that information was given. He couldn't figure out if Arthur was very old. He didn't have any ideas about why they moved. When we talked about it afterwards it turned out that Jim doesn't know much about Canadian geography. He wasn't sure if Manitoba was a city or province and he didn't know where it was.

He wasn't too sure why Mary would have ridden a horse to school. He said, "Because she lived on a farm, I guess."

Jim did have a good sense of what kind of person Mary might be.

Conclusion
This article was harder for Tim to understand than I thought it would be. His understanding was hampered by his difficulty with reading numbers and his lack of knowledge about dates and Canada.

We'll do more work on reading numbers. Tim would also like to know more about Canada. He said that he "can't make heads or tails" out of the TV news. He would also like help with reading longer words so we will work on syllables. I will continue to encourage him to use context clues.

USING A TAPE RECORDER TO ASSESS READING SKILLS

MEASURING PROGRESS IN WRITING

Assessing Writing Processes

Because the process that writers employ has an impact on the quality of what they produce, you should assess the process your student uses to write. The following questions can be answered through observation or can be adapted to be answered in discussion with your student.

- What does the student do to prepare herself for writing? (Examples: think, talk, write notes, use a tape recorder)

- Is the student prepared to revise and change ideas as the writing is in progress?
- What does the student do following the first draft? (Examples: nothing, proofread for minor errors, reread and make major revisions if necessary.)
- Is the student preoccupied with spelling, that is, does the word choice depend on what she can spell?

Assessing Writing Content

Whenever you are evaluating writing which your student has done, your initial response should be directed towards the content. The purpose of writing is to communicate and this should be emphasized in your evaluation comments. A checklist can be used to ensure that all important characteristics are assessed.

A Checklist for Assessing Writing

a) Good **b**) Satisfactory **c**) Needs improvement

Central Idea

___ topic is clear
___ main idea (purpose) is apparent

Organization

___ one idea logically follows another
___ transitions are used (e.g., also, however, but)
___ introduction, body and conclusion are well proportioned

Development

___ important points are clearly emphasized
___ opinions are backed up by facts, details, etc.
___ all sentences/ideas relate to the main idea
___ writing is original
___ introduction makes you want to read on
___ body shows insight into the topic
___ conclusion summarizes without being repetitious

Adapted from: Assessing English: Writing, *Continuing Education Division, Ministry of Education , Victoria, BC, 1984. p. 26.*

Student Writing Sample

The best job I ever had was when I was a nurses aid at St. George Hospital. It was hard work but I liked helping them. The pay was'nt to bad but it was'nt that good. But all the old people were happy to see me. Because I talked to them. Its important to talk to them because nobody bothers.

The Tutor's Evaluation

The topic is clear. The main idea is less clear. (Is it that helping old people is rewarding because ...?) Perhaps brainstorming and talking will help her identify her main points. She has given some detail to explain what she liked about the job and what she didn't like about the job.

The paragraph needs to be better organized. How does her pay relate to her feeling about the job? She has succeeded in conveying that there were pros and cons and that she had mixed feelings. Expanding the details might lead to one paragraph about the positive aspects and one about the negative.

Many points could be added. What were her tasks? What were the people like? A conclusion is needed.

She knows that each sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a period. She needs to work on sentence structure to help her with sentence fragments. We can work on *because* sentence frames.

Assessing the Mechanics of Writing

Frequently students will perform better on a punctuation or grammar exercise than they will in their own writing. This may occur because an exercise has a clear focus, whereas in personally-generated writing the focus is on a range of concerns, not least of which is content. For this reason, several writing samples are a better guide to writing strengths and difficulties than an exercise quiz. When you are evaluating writing samples, watch for:

- proper use of end punctuation (periods, exclamation points, question marks);
- appropriate use of capitalization;
- agreement between subjects and verbs;
- sentences that are complete ideas.

MEASURING PROGRESS IN SPELLING

Often students are painfully aware of their difficulties with spelling and for this reason a spelling assessment quiz may be so frustrating and embarrassing for them that it is better to assess their spelling on the basis of the written work they do as part of their tutorial sessions. Another reason for preferring this informal, on-going assessment is that it enables you to recognize patterns of strengths and weaknesses which are not always apparent from one or two spelling quizzes.

Assessing Spelling Strategies

Many students are poor spellers because they do not have an effective method for

learning new words. This makes an assessment of spelling strategies imperative. The following questions can be adapted to be answered through observation or used in discussion with your student.

Spelling Strategies Self-Assessment

When I am learning a new word:	Yes	No
1. I figure out the part of the word which might give me trouble.	❑	❑
2. I copy it carefully to make sure it's right.	❑	❑
3. I spell the word aloud.	❑	❑
4. I write the word while saying it.	❑	❑
5. I try to picture it in my mind to help me remember it.	❑	❑
6. I think of memory tricks to help me remember it.	❑	❑
7. I try to break down the word into parts and sound it out.	❑	❑
8. I quiz myself on it.	❑	❑

Identifying Error Patterns

To identify spelling error patterns, keep a list of the spelling errors which your student makes over a number of sessions and then group them according to the type of error that each represents. Once you have identified an area of difficulty, you can construct lessons and exercises to teach and reinforce the correct spelling. Sometimes this may involve going several steps back and teaching an area which provides a foundation for improved spelling. For example, if a student leaves out syllables when spelling multi-syllable words, then it is important to teach the concept of a syllable and provide practice to make sure that each spoken syllable is represented in writing when the word is spelled. In this case knowledge about syllables is a necessary foundation for correcting the spelling problem. Do not be surprised if letters are left out. This only reflects areas that need to be taught. For example, btr for butter will tell you that your student does not know that every syllable has a vowel and that /bu/ and /er/ require vowels.

The following is a list of categories which can help you to group spelling errors. Sometimes you will find that a word fits into more than one category.

Errors and Error Patterns

1. Sight words
These are words which do not follow rules and are not spelled as they sound.

2. Rapid speech pronunciation, e.g., *ban wagon* for *band wagon*, *ledder* for *letter*, *hafta* for *have to*

3. Rules regarding adding suffixes, e.g., hoping for hopping, raceing for racing

4. Blends
('l', 'r', 's', 't' blends as in flower, grip, swim, twin)

5. Digraphs
('ch', 'ck', 'wh', 'sh', 'ph', 'th', 'ng', as in church, clock, whip, shot, phone, that, ring)

6. Vowel Combinations, e.g., pech or peech for peach

7. Syllable Omission, e.g., manger for manager

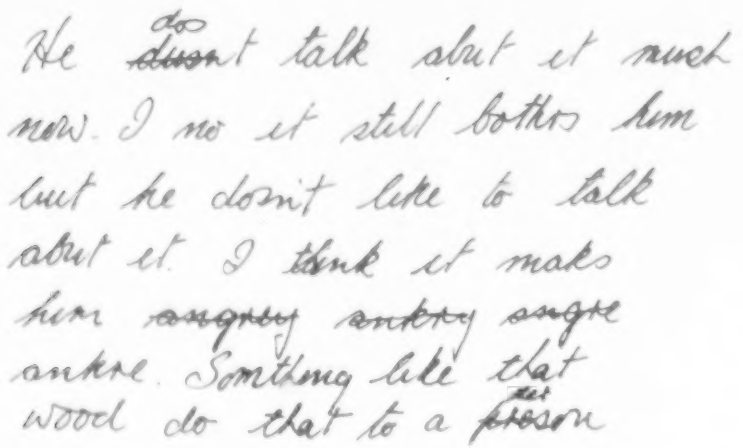
8. Syllable Types
- silent 'e' (lik for like)
- consonant plus 'le' (ratul for rattle)

9. Vowels Followed by 'r', e.g., burd for bird; lern for learn

10. Prefixes and Suffixes, e.g., happiniss, perheat, ast (for asked)

11. Special word families, e.g., walk, talk

Identifying Error Patterns


He ~~dusn't~~ talk abut it much
now. I no it still bothrs him
but he don't like to talk
abut it. I think it maks
him ~~angrey~~ ~~ankry~~ ~~angre~~
ankre. Somthing like that
wood do that to a ~~prson~~ person

MEASURING LISTENING AND MEMORY SKILLS

The next two assessments are designed to be completed by your student. Their purpose is to draw attention to the importance of developing good listening and memory skills and to identify areas that need improvement. If your student cannot read the questions, you can read them to her. The questions should prove to be thought provoking and should lead to discussion.

Student Self-Test on Memory Skills

	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Do I believe that I can remember?	❑	❑	❑
2. Do I begin with the purpose of remembering?	❑	❑	❑
3. Do I use memory tricks to help my memory?	❑	❑	❑
4. Do I organize on paper and/or in my mind what I want to remember?	❑	❑	❑
5. Do I picture things in my mind to help me remember?	❑	❑	❑
6. Do I link what I am learning to what I already know to help me understand and remember?	❑	❑	❑
7. Do I try to understand before I try to remember?	❑	❑	❑
8. Do I test myself to practice remembering?	❑	❑	❑
9. Do I know that I can learn and remember better in many short study times than in one long study time?	❑	❑	❑
10. Do I keep practicing after I think I know and can remember?	❑	❑	❑
11. Do I understand that there is a difference between remembering something well enough to know it when I see it (e.g., read it) and remembering it well enough to do it myself without copying (e.g., spell it)?	❑	❑	❑

Adapted from the Adult Basic Literacy Assessment Kit, *BC Ministry of Education, 1981.*

Student Self-Test on Listening Skills

Answer each of the following questions with:

A. Now and then **B.** About1/2 the time **C**. Most of the time **D**. All of the time

___1. Do you begin with the idea of paying careful attention to what the speaker is saying?

___2. Do you push worries, fears and problems away when listening?

___3. Do you tune out noises and other distractions?

___4. Do you show interest in what the speaker is saying?

___5. Do you try not to let negative feelings toward the subject get in the way of listening?

___6. Do you try not to talk and listen at the same time?

___7. Do you keep eye contact with the speaker?

___8. Do you try not to annoy or distract the speaker, e.g., by tapping fingers?

___9. Do you give the speaker time to say what he or she has to say?

___10. Do you listen to how things are said to pick up clues about the meaning?

___11. Do you go over in your mind what the speaker has said to remember the important points or steps?

___12. Do you check what you have just heard with what you already know to see if it is new or different information?

___13. Do you ask questions if you don't understand?

(Parts of this have been adapted from the Adult Basic Literacy Assessment Kit, *BC Ministry of Education, 1981).*

CHAPTER CHALLENGE

1. You have given this story to your student to read aloud. These are the notations you have made as he read. (See p. 83 for notation key.) What areas require work?

Some Tips if Lost

[Ever] H
Every year people get lost in the
mō
mountains of British Columbia.
(didn't know) [fin]
~~Search~~ers sometimes cannot ~~find~~ lost

hikers or skiers. Do you like to hike or
H
cross country ski in the mountains?

Here are some tips if you get lost.

• Stay in one place.

• If you hear a (helicopter) find a clearing
corrected after he read the sentence

and wave some clothing.
ˇ

• Be prepared, even on a short hike.
H

Always carry a whistle, flashlight,
read correctly this time
water, warm clothing, matches,

and a large plastic garbage bag

for protection. trouble with "tion" but figured it out.

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Westcoast Reader *October, 1987*

2. a) Re-read the sample of student writing on p. 87. Use the checklist on p. 86 to help you assess the writing.

b) At your next session you are going to go over the paragraph with your student. What will you say about her skill levels? What do you think you should begin to work on?

3. Use the "Error and Error Paterns" (p. 88) to group the spelling errors in the student writing sample on p. 89. What group might you and your student begin work on first?

RESOURCES

Tutor Resources

The following is a brief list of materials which you may find useful for further exploration of literacy issues and literacy teaching techniques.

1. Adult Basic Literacy Curriculum Guide and Resource Book

2. Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines
Items **1** and **2** written by Don Sawyer. For information on purchasing them, write to:

Co-ordinator
Adult Basic Education
Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training
Colleges & Institutes Division
2nd Floor, 818 Broughton Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

3. Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit Newsletter

4. How's It Going: An Alternative to Testing Students in Literacy

5. An Introduction to Literacy Teaching

Items **3**, **4**, and **5** are available from:

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
Kingsbourne Howe
229/231 High Holborn
London, England
WCIV 7DA

6. Journeyworkers
This is a series of five videos and a tutor's handbook. Written by Mary Norton, **Journeyworkers** is available from:

ACCESS Alberta
295 Midpark Way, S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
T2X 2A8

7. Literacy in British Columbia and the Yukon
Written by Richard Darville.

8. A Directory of Adult Basic Education Programs in B.C.
(Updated annually)

9. Adult Literacy Resource Information Package
(Updated annually)

Items **7, 8** and **9** are available from Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.
11091 - 72nd Avenue
Delta, B.C.
V4E 1Y4
Telephone (604) 594-0664

10. The Right to Read: Tutor's Handbook
Available from:

Frontier College
31 Jackes Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 1E2

11. Writing on Our Side
This booklet explores "corporate" versus "popular" writing and explains how to make your writing easy to read. Available from:

Progressive Literacy Group
2185 East 3rd Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5M 1H9

Publishers

Following is a list of some publishers who carry literacy materials. Their catalogues should help you to decide if the material would be appropriate for your student.

1. Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
   Kingsbourne House
   229/231 High Holborn
   London, England
   WCIV 7DA

2. Cambridge: The Adult Education Company
   3771 Victoria Park, Park Avenue
   Scarborough, Ontario
   M1W 2P9

3. Dominie Press Ltd.
   1361 Huntingwood Drive
   Unit 7
   Agincourt, Ontario
   M1S 3J1

4. New Readers Press
   1320 Jamesville Avenue
   Syracuse, New York
   13210

5. Scott, Foresman and Co.
   1900 E. Lake Avenue
   Glenview, Illinois

Note: A number of catalogues may be obtained from:

Educational Resources Ltd.
#109 - 8475 Ontario Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5X 3E8
(604) 324-9717

Newspapers & Magazines

These materials are written for adults learning to read and write.

1. *Westcoast Reader*
   c/o Loraine Wong
   6137 - 240th. Street
   R.R. #8
   Langley, B.C.
   V3A 6H4

2. *Your News* (Canada's Teaching Newspaper)
   P.O. Box 491
   Station Mt. Royal
   Montreal, Quebec
   H3P 3C7

3. *Voices: New Writers for New Readers*
   14525 110A Avenue
   Surrey, B.C.
   V3R 2B4